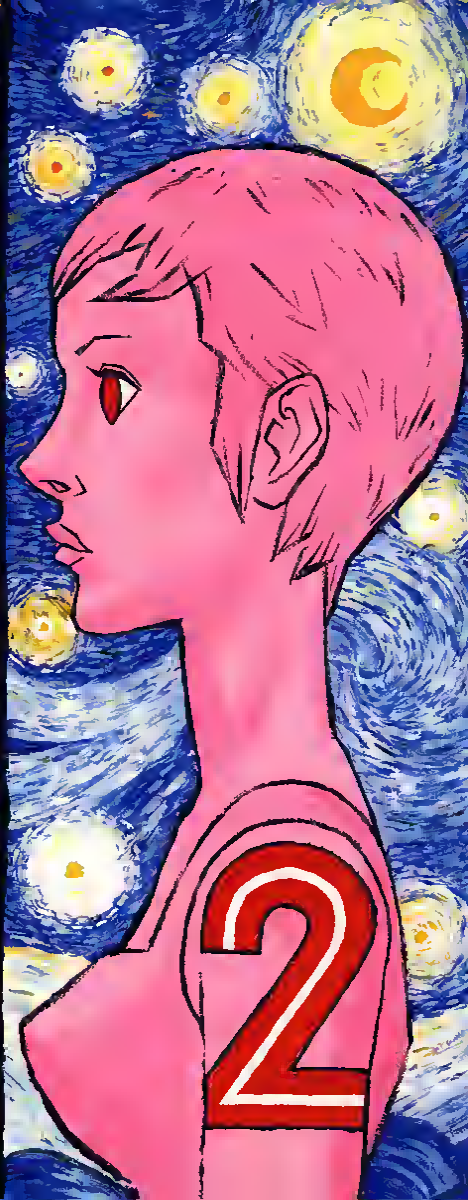
MORNING KC

バカとゴホ

AND OTHER STORIES

SHINKICHI KATO



バカとゴッホ 2

Gogh and Bakas

加藤伸吉
SHINKICHI KATOH

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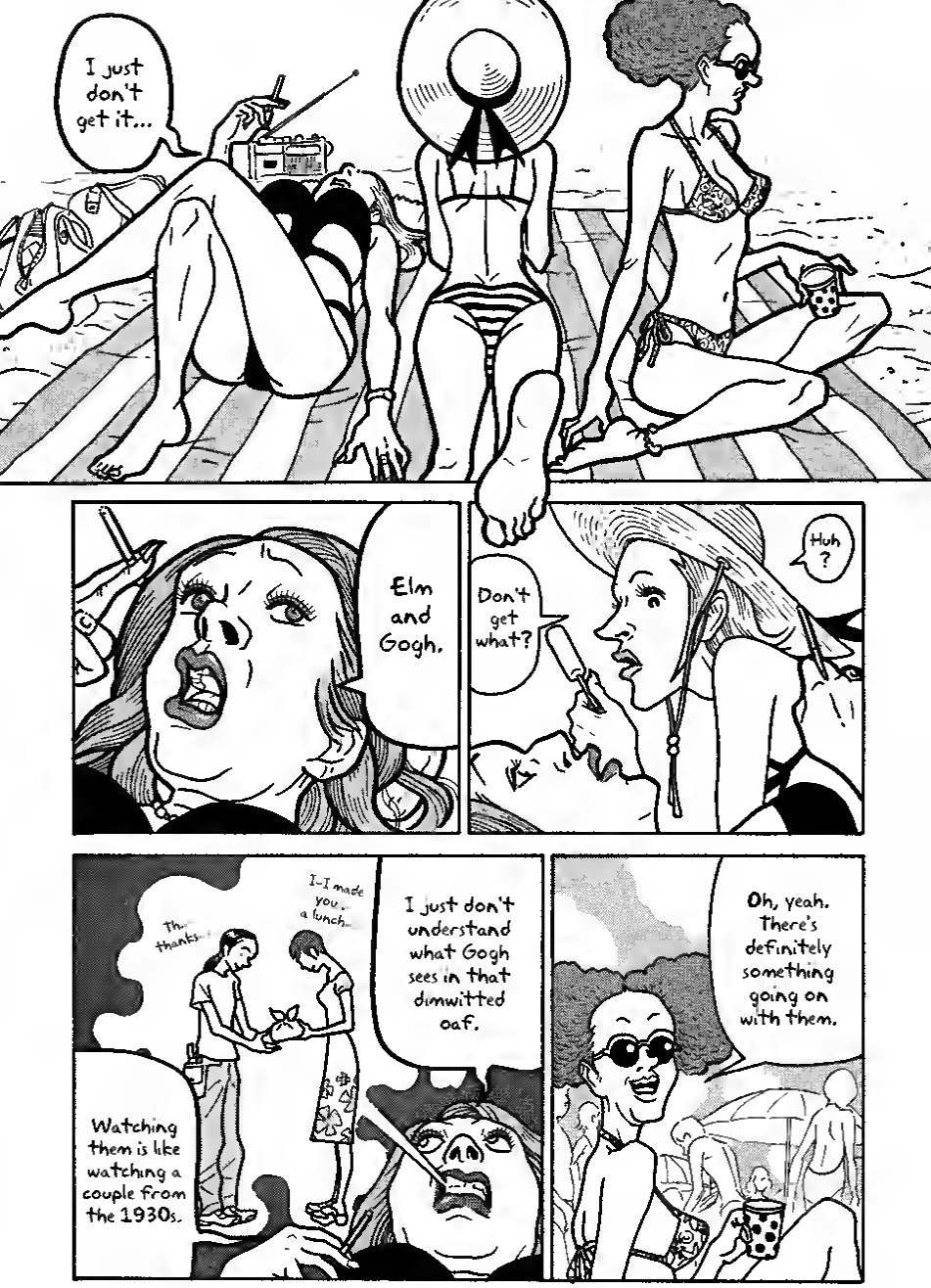
LOVE IS UNSTEADY


I just don't get it...
Elm and Gogh.
Don't get what?
Huh ?
I just don't understand what Gogh sees in that dimwitted oaf.
I-I made you a lunch...
Th-thanks...
Watching them is like watching a couple from the 1930s.
Oh, yeah. There's definitely something going on with them.

Actually, I think they make a very nice couple...
Hmmm.
A girl as cute as Gogh could have just about any man she wants.
Don't you think?
Well, I still don't get it.
Crap!
...though it hasn't helped his coordination.
And at least it's put a spring into Elm's step...
I suppose it's all for the best.
What's the harm? No point to getting these things if you can't show them off!
Oh, stop it! Don't think we haven't seen you juggling those bags all day!
Maybe it's that element of unfathomability that makes it worthwhile?
There you go! Love is irrational above all else...

DADA
DADA

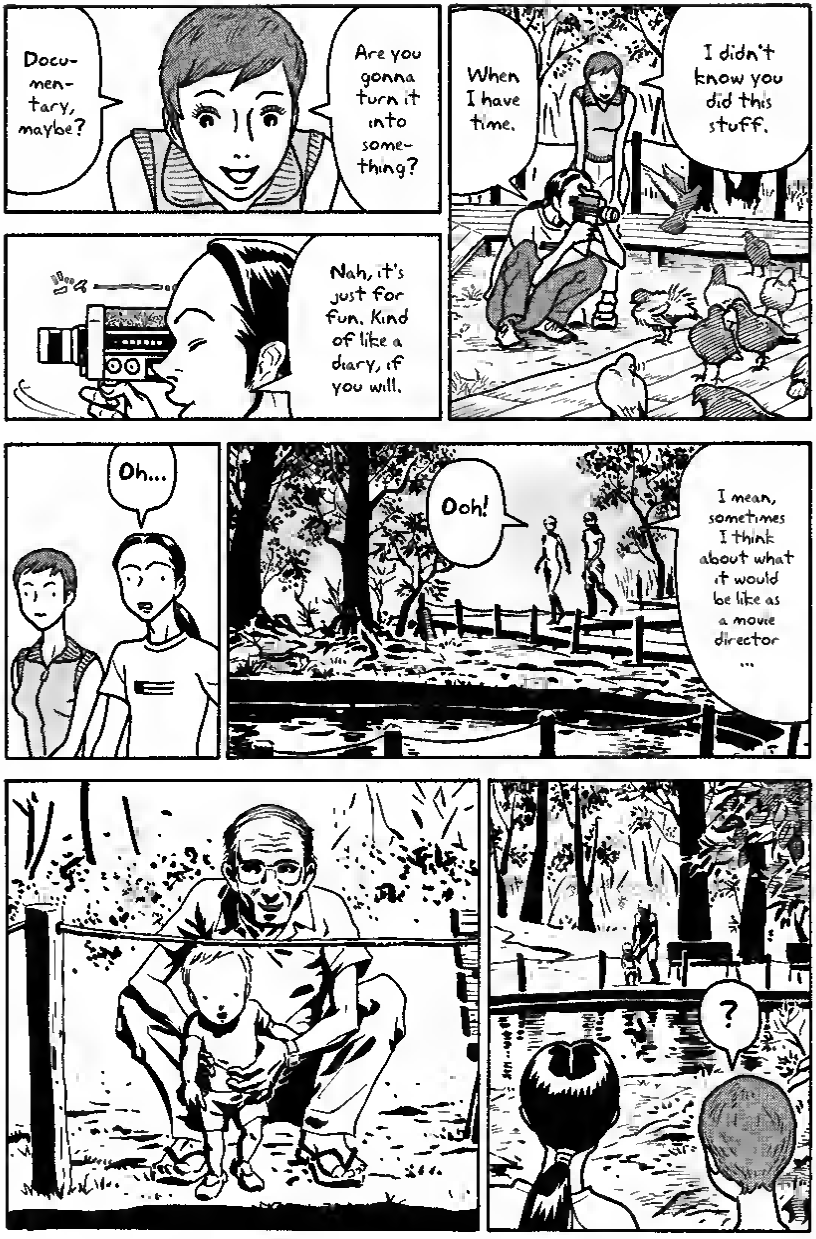
CLUB
ガロック
CLOSE
Are the monsters there?
It's closed

Here we go.
DADA
DADA

Ahhhhh!
Ah...
Yawwwwn!
Finishing up that homework?
How's it going, Elm?
Oh.
...

Oooh.
Haha ha...
How about you, Gogh?
Yeah, I got started and the time just flew by...
You're pretty much done!
This is great!
Just taking a little break.
I'm making progress!
That sounds great! I'm in!
Huh? A walk ?!
Really ?
Good weather today. Maybe I'll take a walk.
A break...

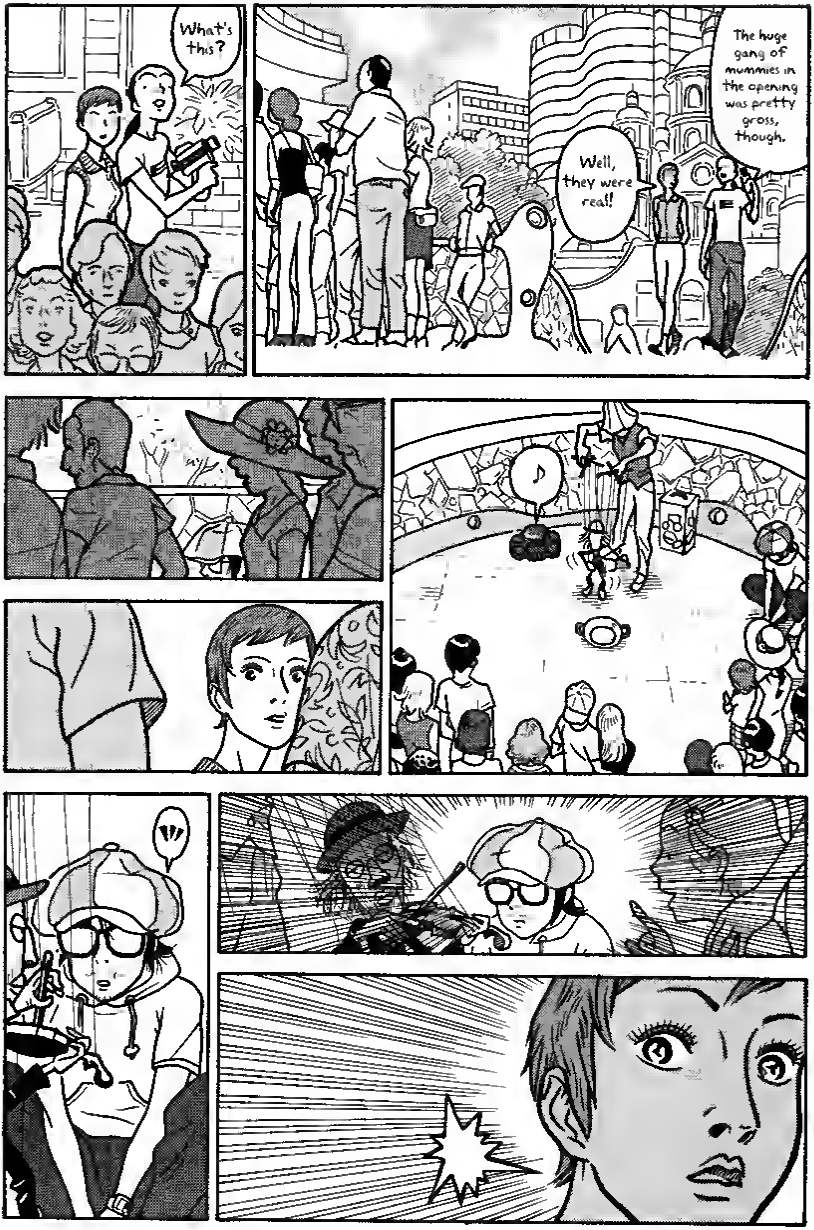
...
...
Oops.
Uh
...
Well, I'll go get ready then!
Yeah
...
H-hang on a few extra minutes... I need to clean this up first.
CLICK
C'mon, kitty. Smile for me.


Docu-
men-
tary,
maybe?
Are you
gonna
turn it
into
some-
thing?
Nah, it's
just for
fun. Kind
of like a
diary, if
you will.
When
I have
time.
I didn't
know you
did this
stuff.
Oh...
Ooh!
I mean,
sometimes
I think
about what
it would
be like as
a movie
director
...
?

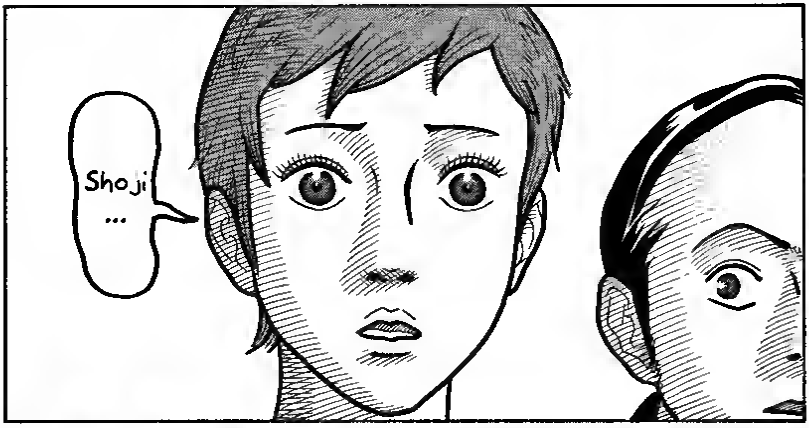
Grandfather and grandson... the happiest scene in the entire world.
It's like the ultimate manifestation of bliss.
Ha ha. Just look at the old guy grinning! He's having a ball...
Ah!
Elm with a girl! Is the world coming to an end?!
Yawwwn.
テカリ座
Sign: Tekari Theater
Hi...
Hi?! Don't ignore me like that!
You're not just gonna keep walking, are you?
I changed plans to stick Nosferatu in this lineup on request!
It's just about to start, too
Well, don't make these last-second changes! You said it was going to be comedy week...
HORROR FEST
Well? What do you say?
C'mon, miss! Come in and catch a flick! Horror's the best for dates!
Uh... okay

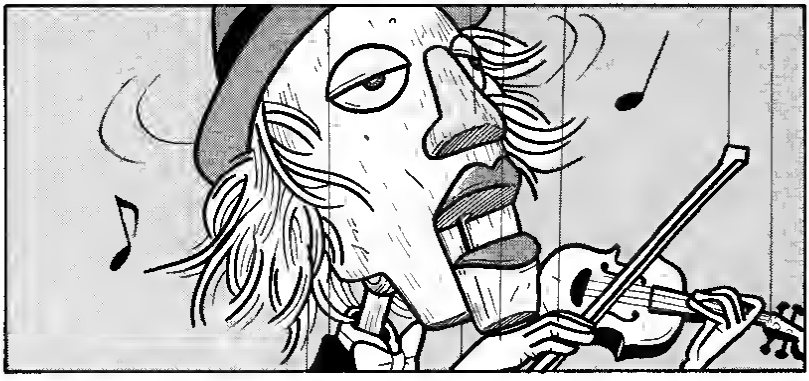
* Picture: PhotoShack

"So... How was it?"
"Well... It was more sad than scary, really..."
"Yeah..."
"But it was good! It was really beautiful!"
"Yeah? I have to admit, I liked it more than the other time I saw it!"
"I really felt the way that fear and sadness can be linked to beauty. There's always something grotesque about beauty..."
"Exactly. Take Isabelle Adjani, for example. She's so beautiful, she's almost a half-step away from horror herself."
"Yeah, totally."


What's this?
Well, they were real!
The huge gang of mummies in the opening was pretty gross, though.

Oh...


Shoji
...

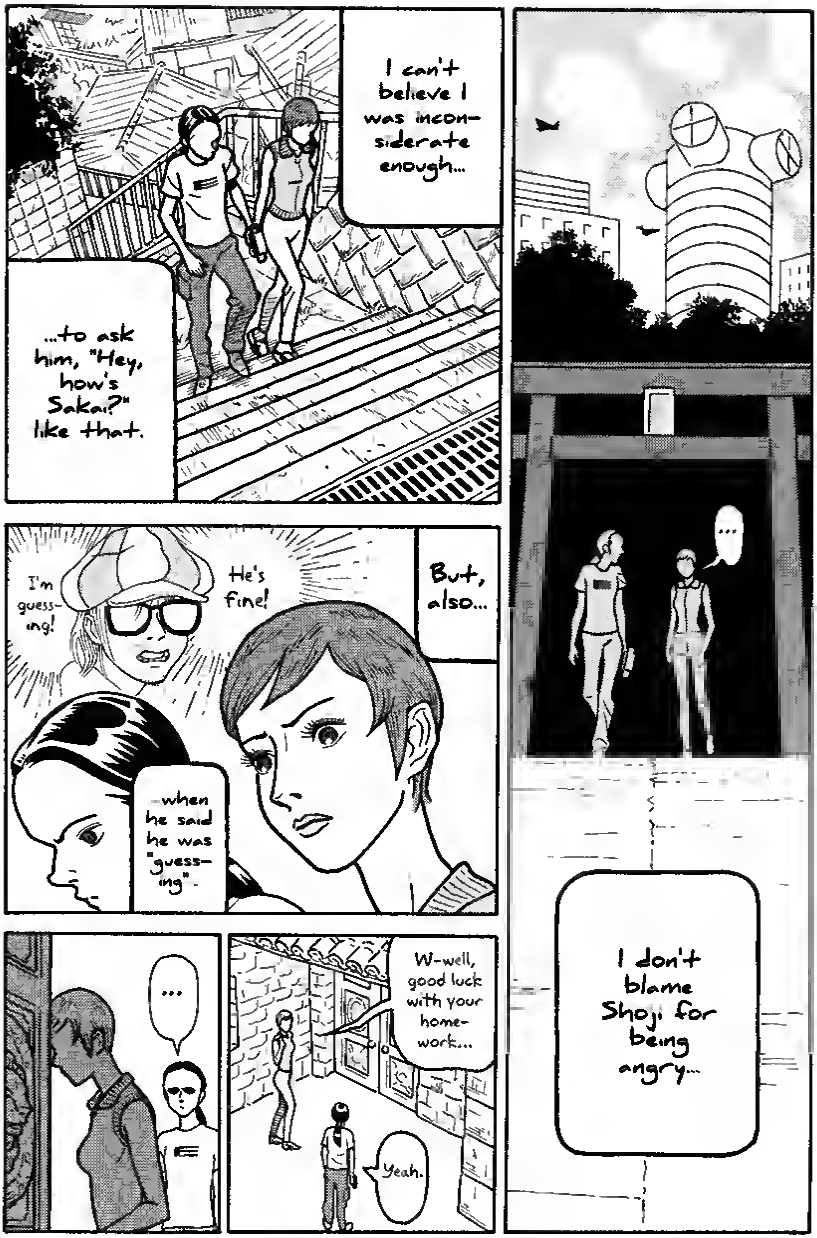


Hi...
Um, this is Elm, from Grotta...
Been a while...
Yeah ...
Hello.
I'm Shoji. Just some cheap-skate.
...
So...
...no shift today?
Huh? Shift?
Ha ha! Right...
Got the ol' tsk-tsk!
A little corporate downsizing, as they call it.
Huh?!

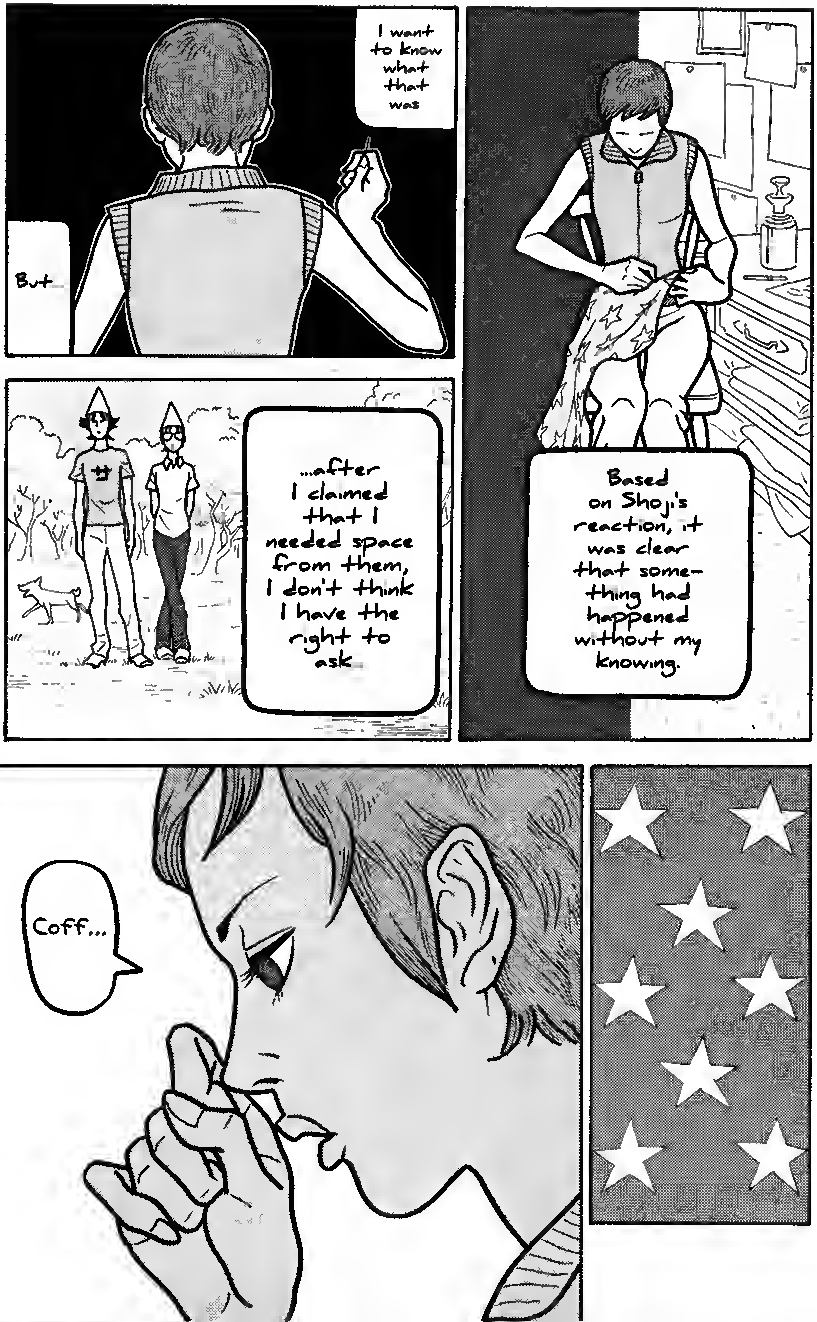
パチ パチ パチ
CLINK
...
I see...
But none of that really matters!
Torya-rya!
Urya-rya!
Ha ha ha! What a stupid song!
パーナッパーナッ
パーナッパーナッ
And how is... Sakai?
...

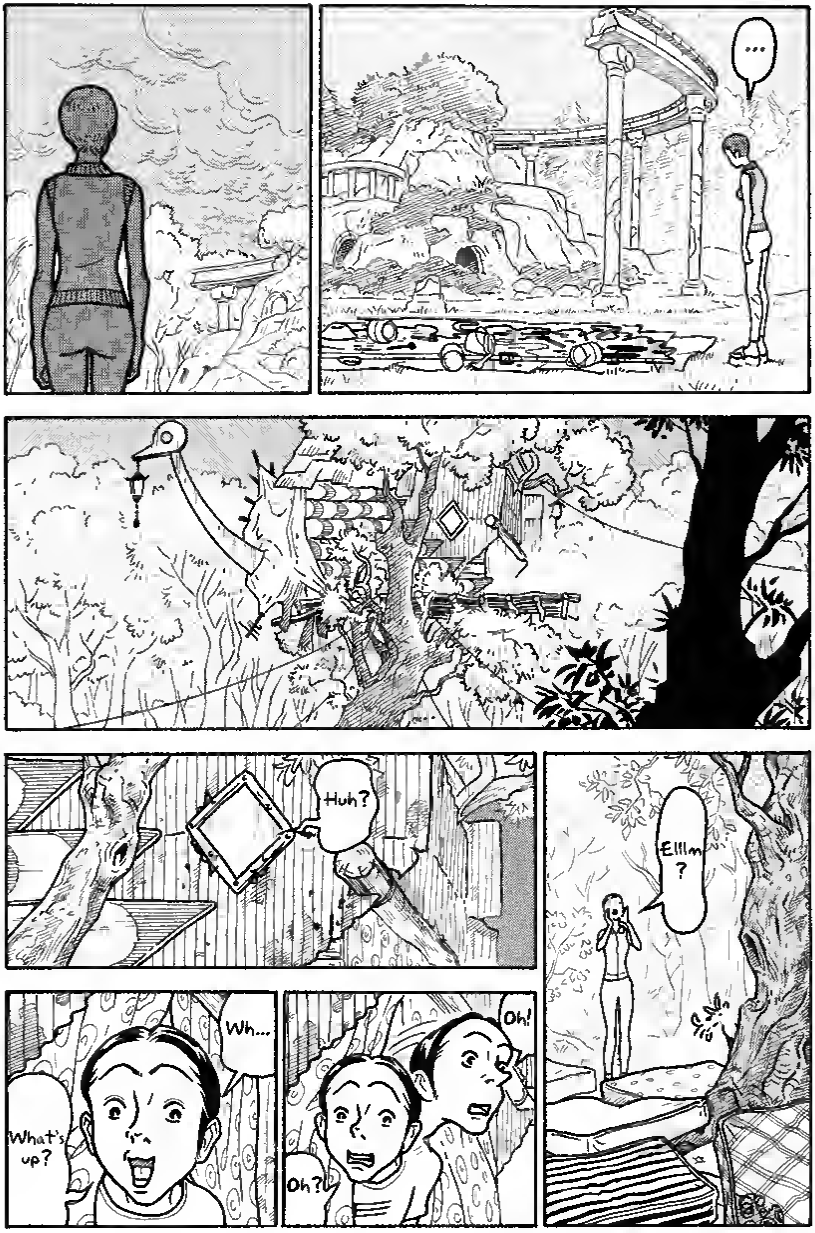
He's fine!
I'm guess-ing!
...

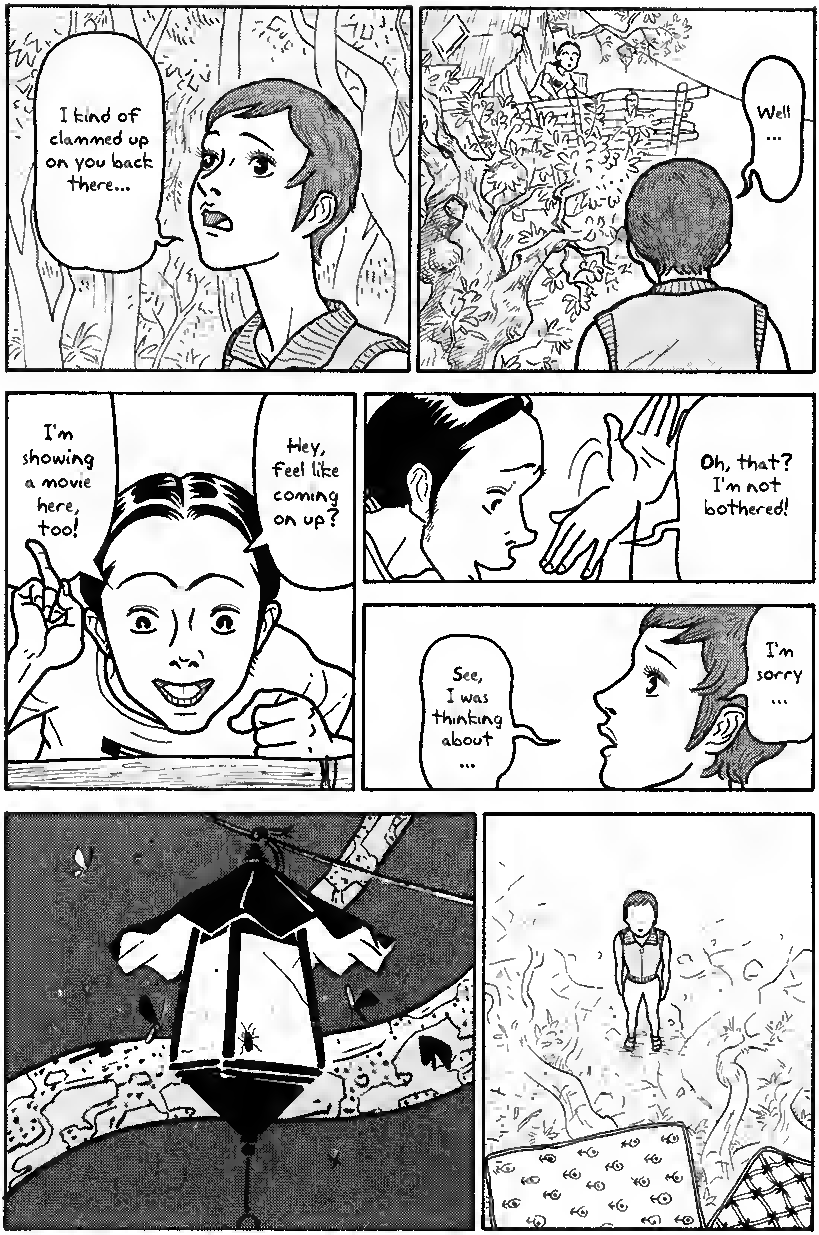
Huh ...?
I'm takin' off! Don't wanna interrupt your date!
But that doesn't really matter, either.
Stupid
Sulking coward!
Bye-bi-hiii!
Shoji ...
...

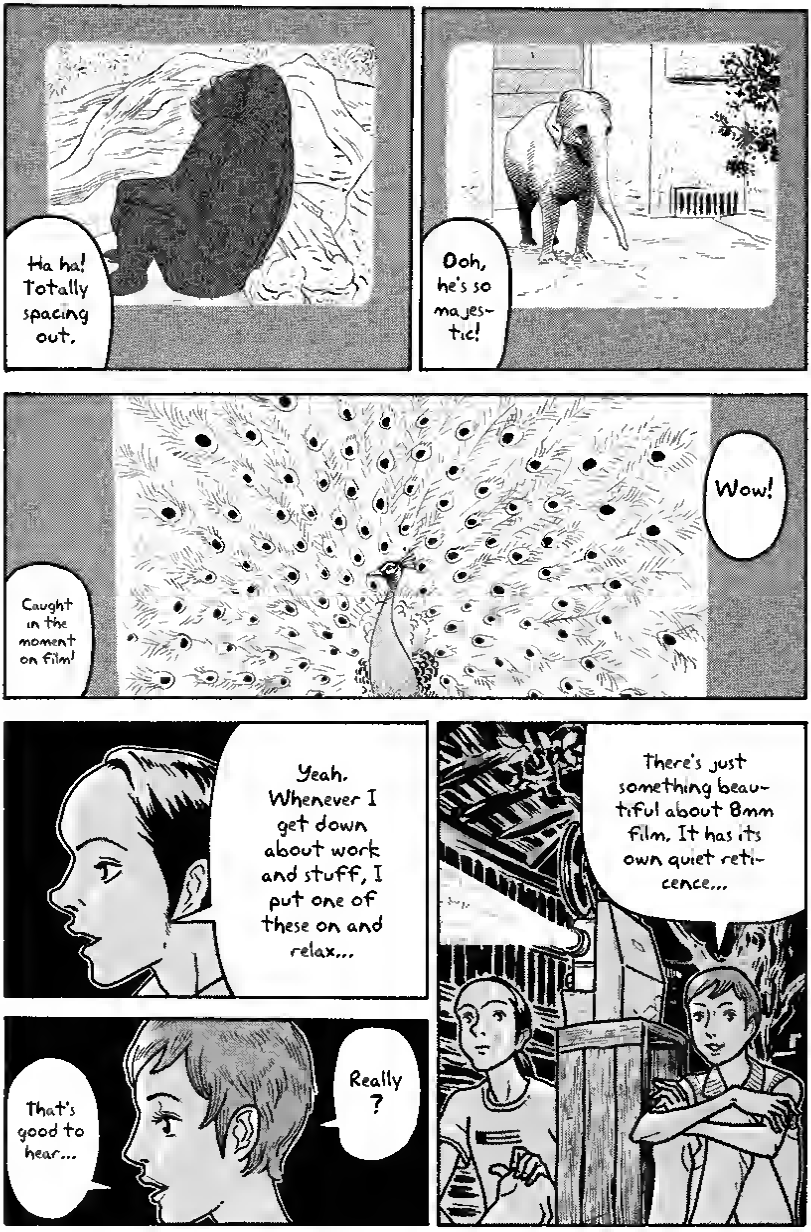

I can't believe I was inconsiderate enough...
...to ask him, "Hey, how's Sakai?" like that.
I don't blame Shoji for being angry...
...
But, also...
He's fine!
I'm guessing!
...when he said he was "guessing".
...
W-well, good luck with your homework...
Yeah.

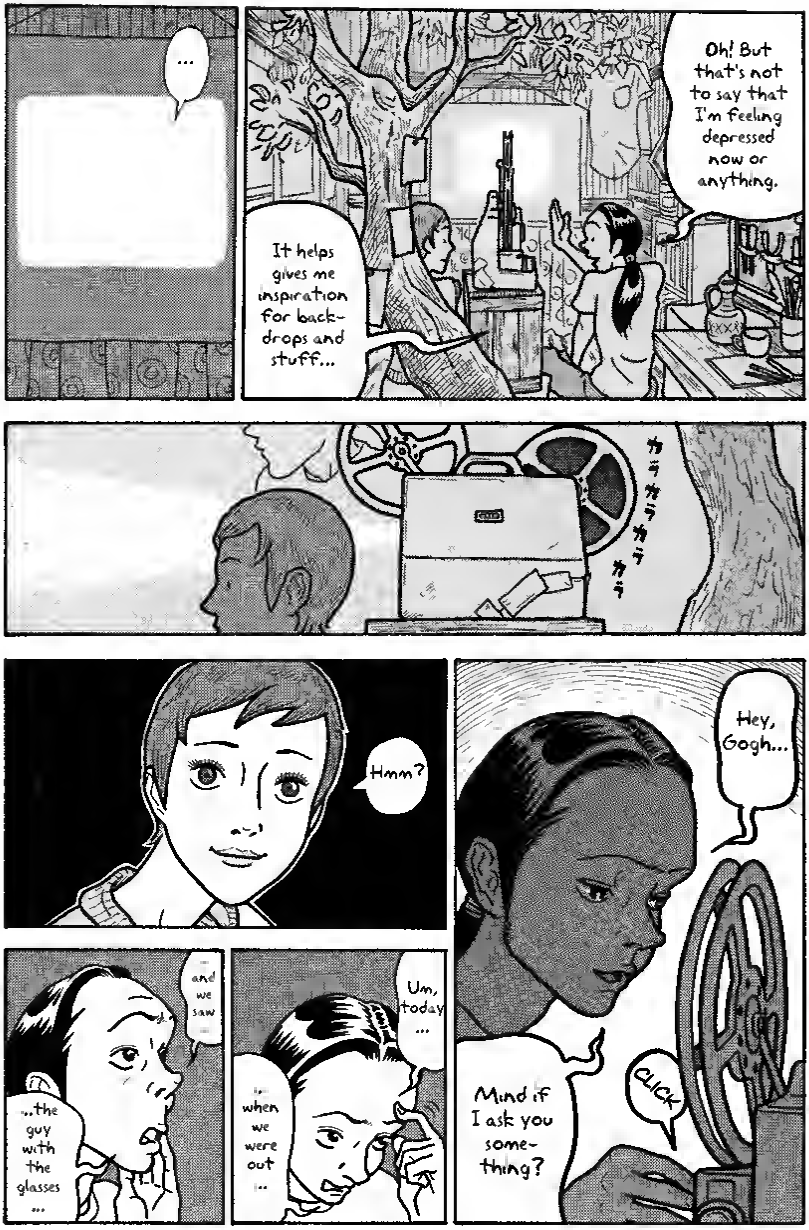
グゲゲアー
…
グワワワ
グワ
グワ

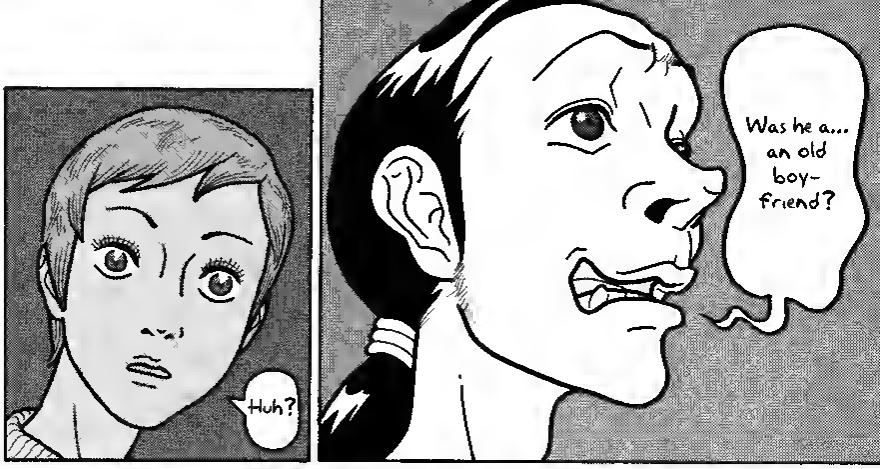

I want to know what that was
But...
Based on Shoji's reaction, it was clear that something had happened without my knowing.
...after I claimed that I needed space from them, I don't think I have the right to ask
Coff...

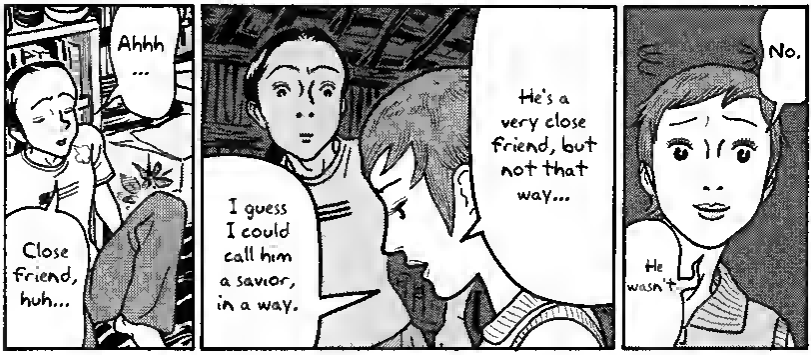

...
Huh?
Elllm ?
Wh...
What's up?
Oh!
Oh?!

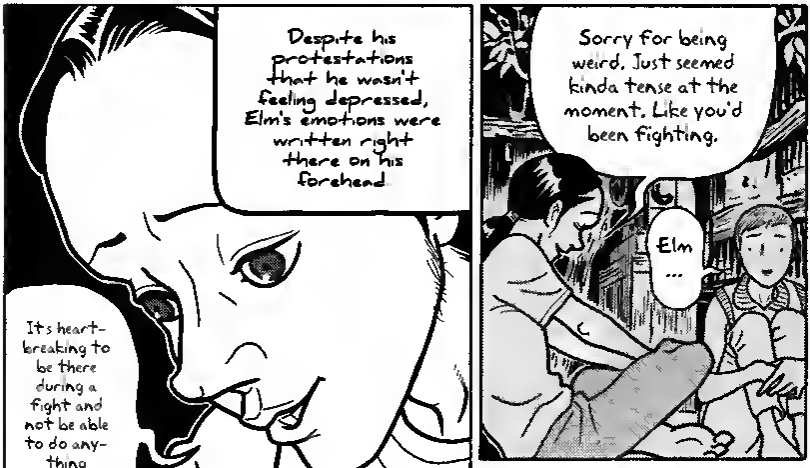

I kind of clammed up on you back there...
Well ...
I'm showing a movie here, too!
Hey, feel like coming on up?
Oh, that? I'm not bothered!
See, I was thinking about ...
I'm sorry ...

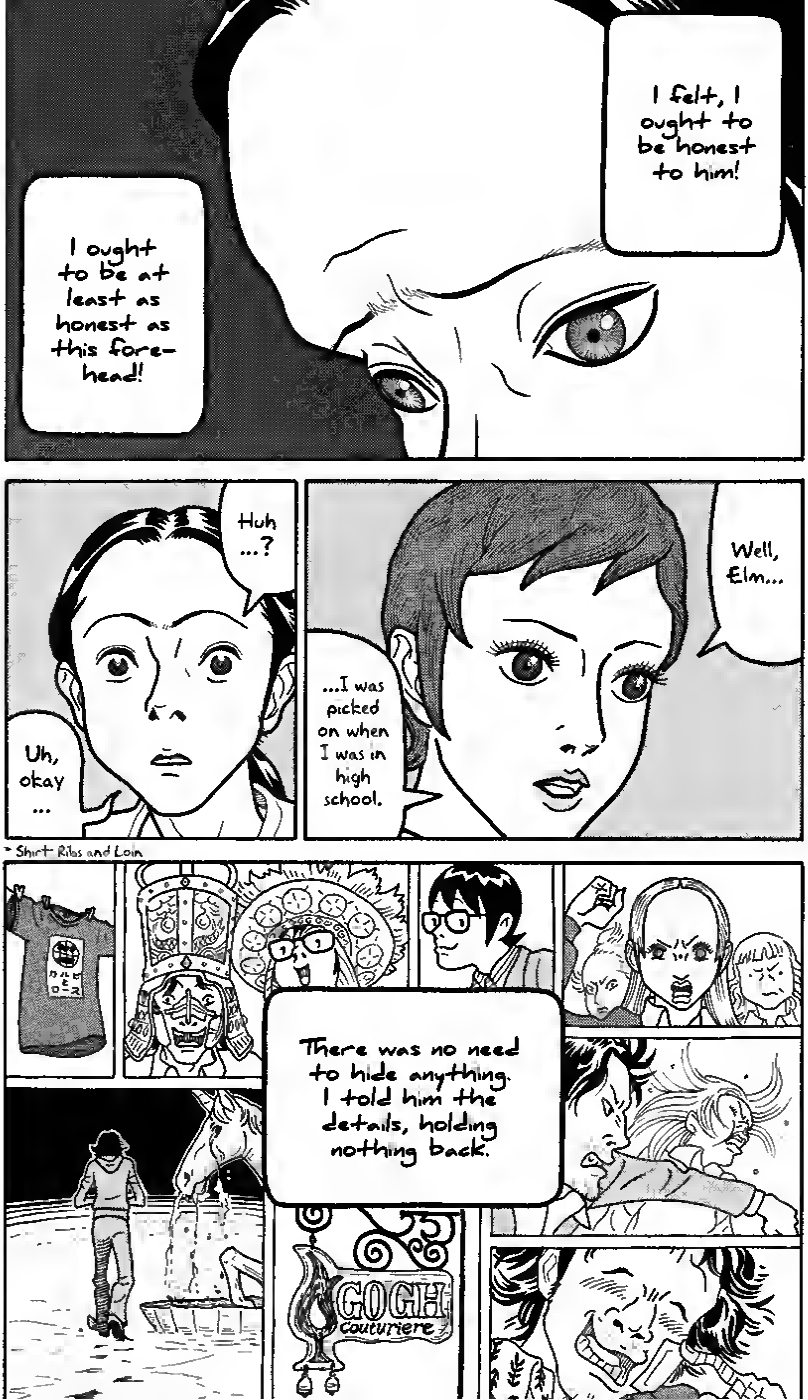

Ha ha! Totally spacing out.
Ooh, he's so majestic!
Wow!
Caught in the moment on film!
Yeah. Whenever I get down about work and stuff, I put one of these on and relax...
There's just something beautiful about 8mm film. It has its own quiet reticence...
Really ?
That's good to hear...


...
It helps gives me inspiration for backdrops and stuff...
Oh! But that's not to say that I'm feeling depressed now or anything.
カラカラカラ
Hmm?
Hey, Gogh...
Mind if I ask you something?
CLICK
Um, today ...
...when we were out ...
...and we saw ...
...the guy with the glasses ...


Huh?
Was he a... an old boy-friend?


Ahhh...
Close friend, huh...
I guess I could call him a savior, in a way.
He's a very close friend, but not that way...
No.
He wasn't

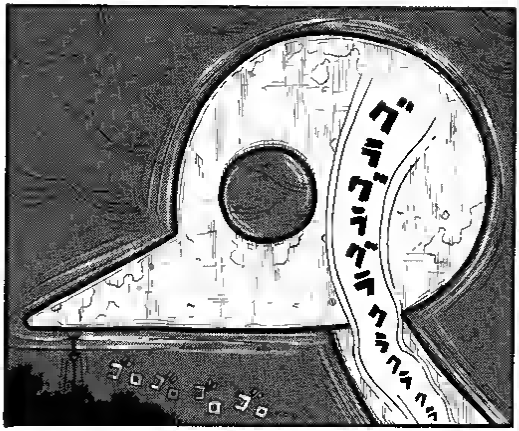

Despite his protestations that he wasn't feeling depressed, Elm's emotions were written right there on his forehead
It's heart-breaking to be there during a fight and not be able to do anything about it.
Sorry for being weird. Just seemed kinda tense at the moment. Like you'd been fighting.
Elm...


I felt, I ought to be honest to him!
I ought to be at least as honest as this forehead!
Huh ...?
Uh, okay ...
Well, Elm...
...I was picked on when I was in high school.
Shirt Ribs and Loin
There was no need to hide anything. I told him the details, holding nothing back.
GOGH couturiere

He sat quietly, listening. His attention was so precious to me..
As I was talking, I realized, "This is the most I've ever told another person about myself!"
...but I couldn't return that feeling ...
Sakai told me that he loved me...
This feeling of relief changed me, made me want to cry out, "I've been living a lie all this time!!"
...
But I didn't have any other choice...
I know it sounds cruel after all I owe him.

!!
Elm ...
Gogh!
I think your choice was the right one!

ゲラゲラ
ガヘゲゲ
ゲラ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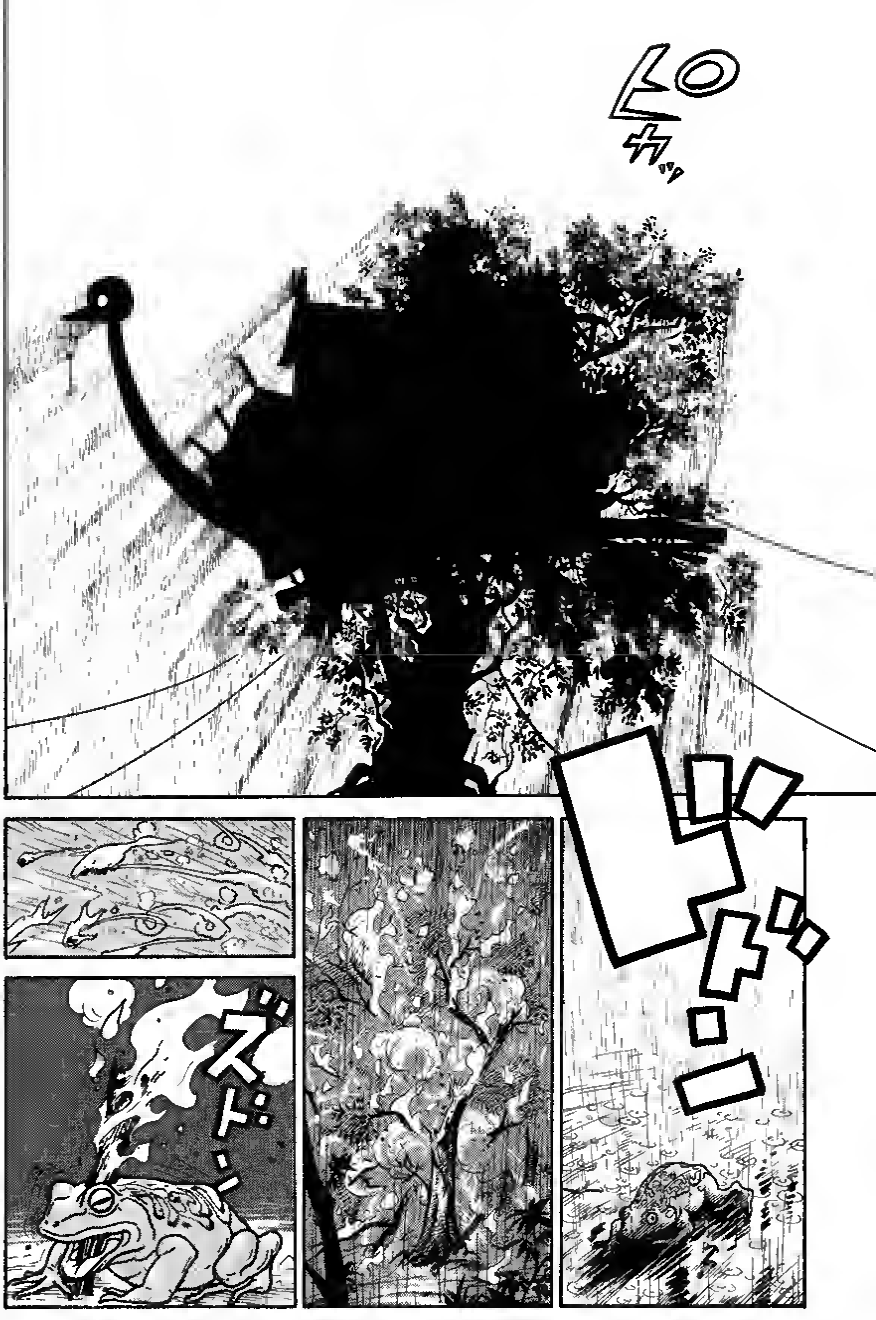
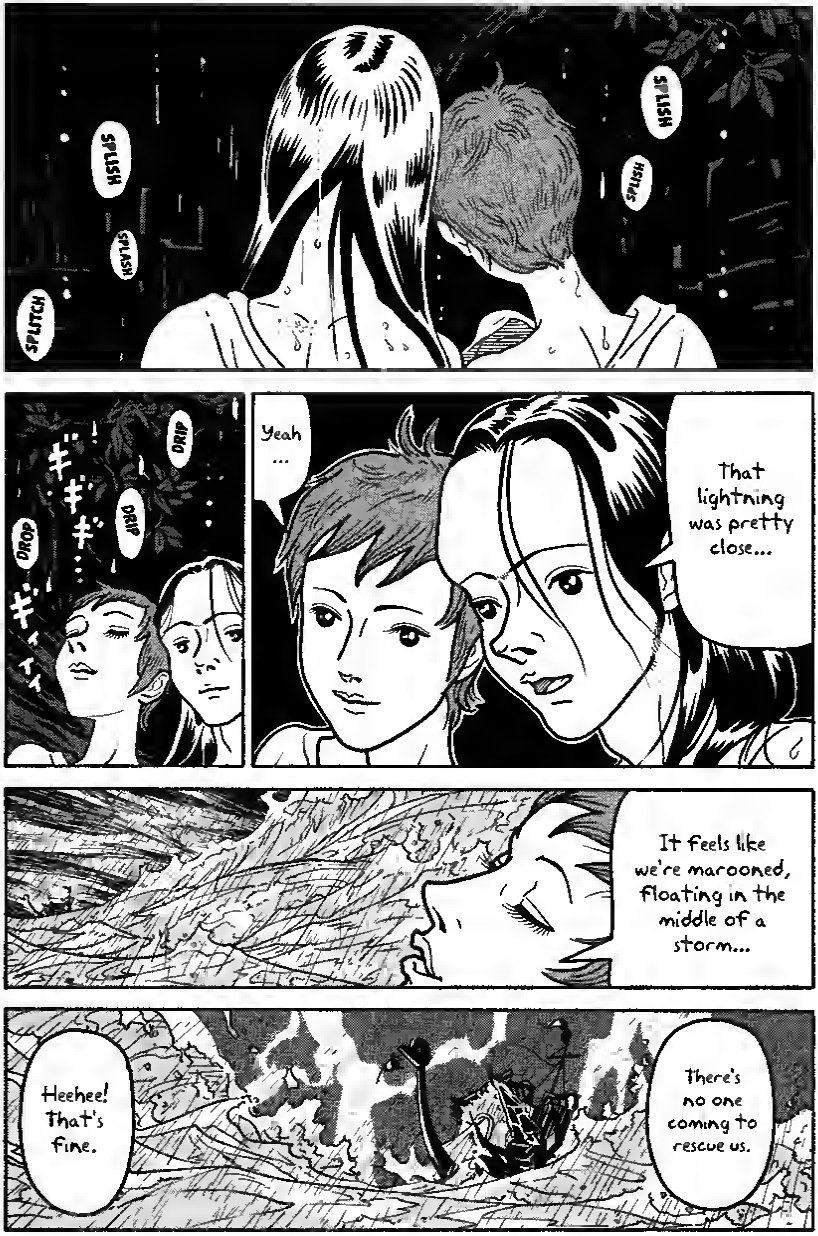
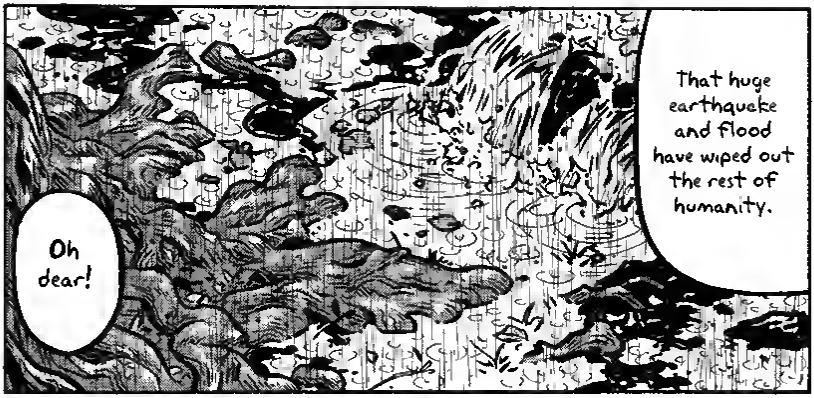

ヒロ
ドドド

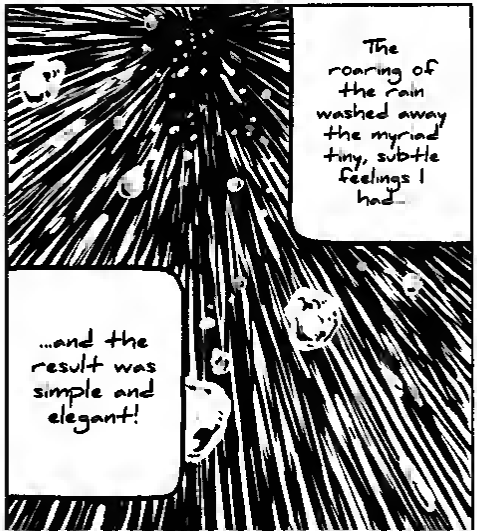

SPLUTCH
SPLISH
SPLISH
SPLISH
SPLISH
DRIP
DRIP
DROP
ギギギ…
ギィィ
Yeah…
That lightning was pretty close…
It feels like we're marooned, floating in the middle of a storm…
Heehee! That's fine.
There's no one coming to rescue us.


That huge earthquake and flood have wiped out the rest of humanity.
Oh dear!

Hee hee hee!

Well, that simplifies things.

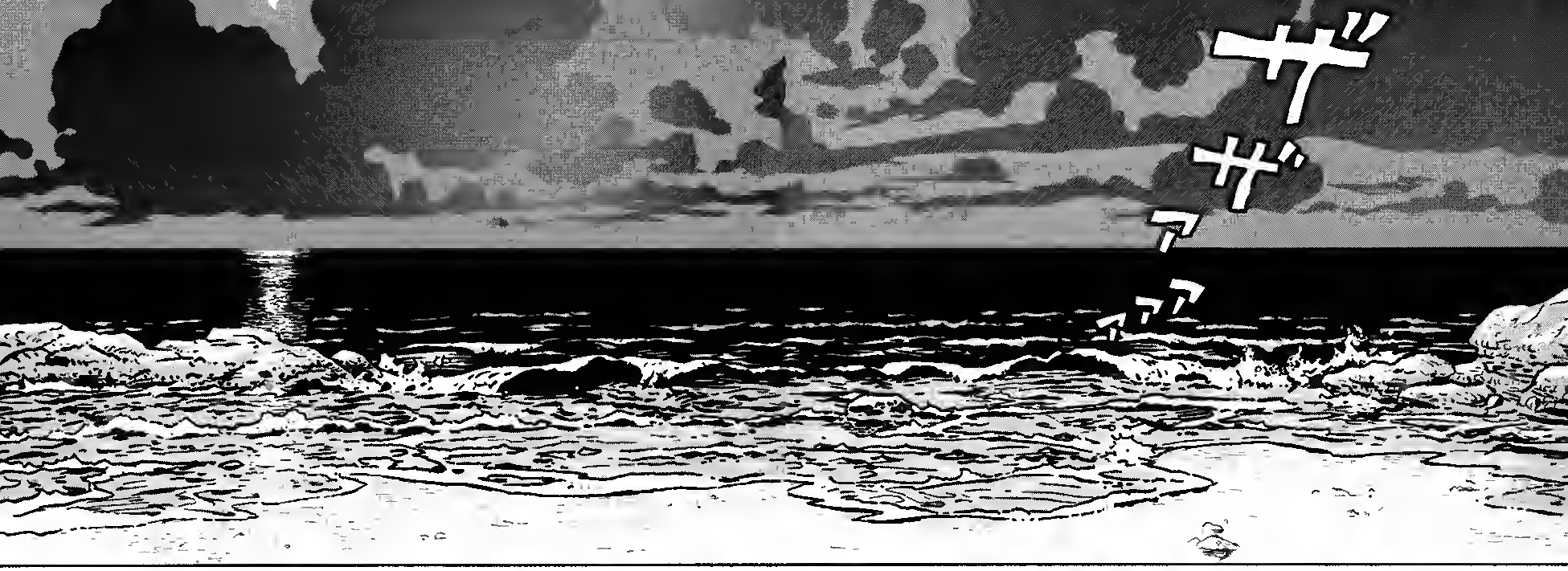
Whatever shall we do? We're the only people left in the entire world!


The roaring of the rain washed away the myriad tiny, subtle feelings I had...
...and the result was simple and elegant!

It was true... At that moment, there was nothing else in the world but us!

?
Ack!
Aaah!
Oh crap! I left the backdrop out!
Well, damn! I was supposed to get that finished tonight!
I'll live my life with this person!
And the thought was... exhilarating!
Bwaha-hahaha! Look at this rain!
It's crazy!
No problems. I'll help!
Thanks!

This feels great!!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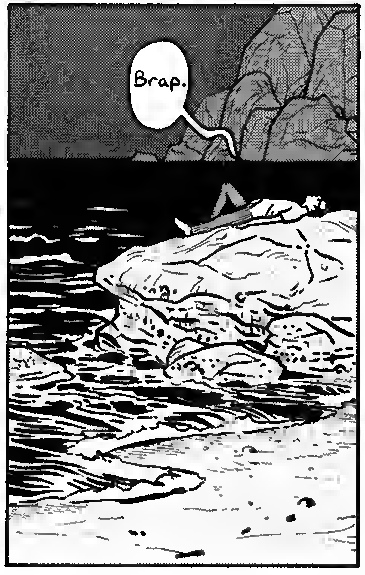
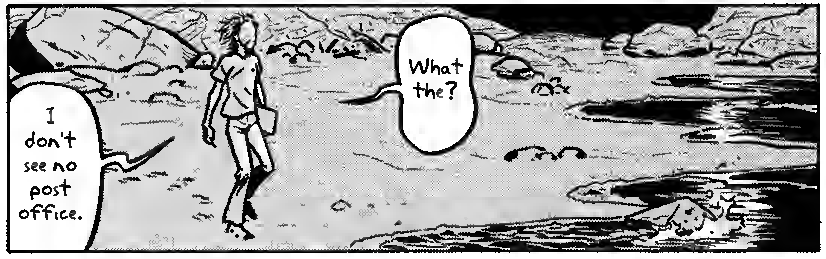
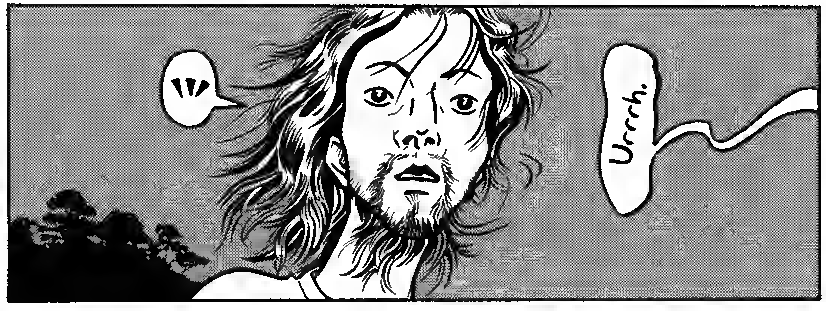
I ain't... done yet...

Life's just gettin going

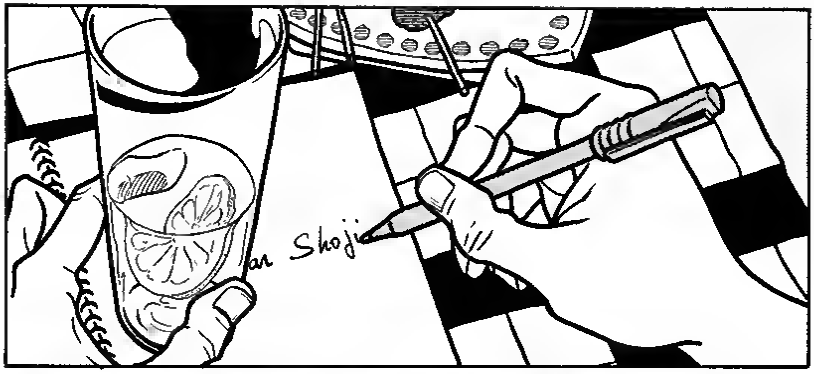

Brap.


I don't see no post office.
What the?


Urrrh.

CHAPTER 8

THE IDIOT TRIBUNE


ar Shoji

Dear Shoji, how are you? Still wearing those glasses?

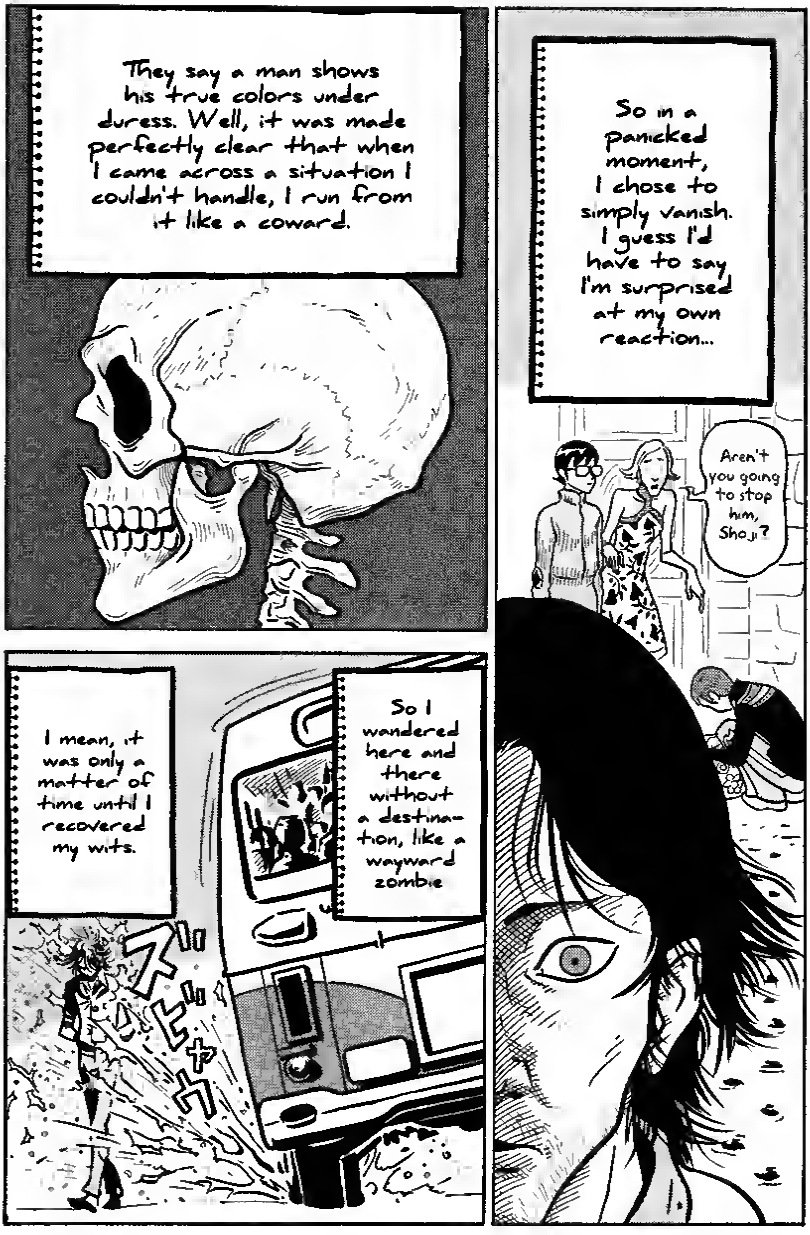
I bet you've been real lonely since I disappeared on you.

Wooo.
That stuff burns ...
I'm writing this letter from a restaurant for jilted lovers, drinking cocktails designed to help weary travelers forget their bitter tears.

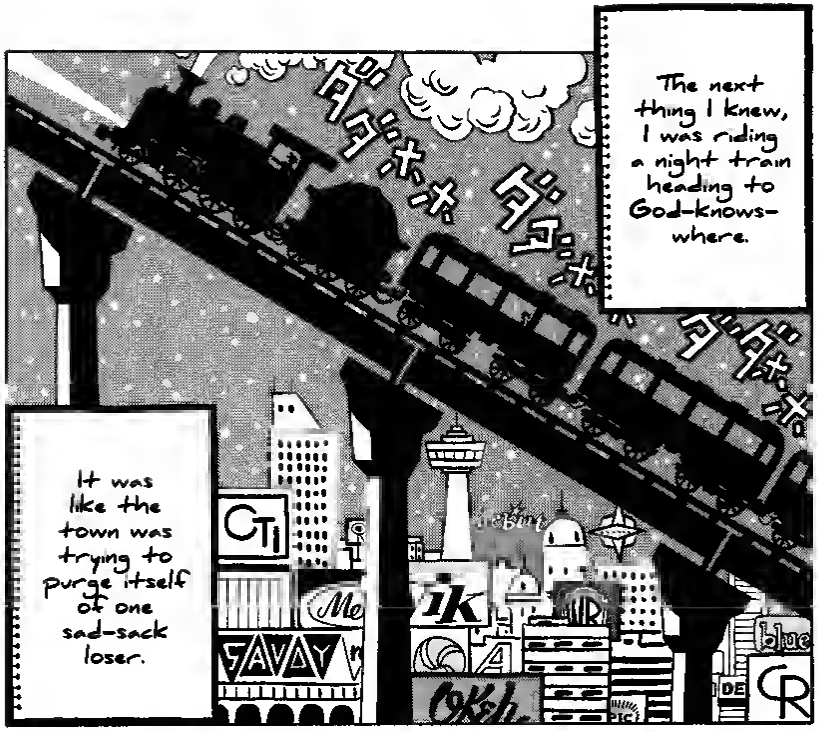
* Sagni Special, Suteki + Tonic

...my life has been a carnival of the dumbfounded and farcical.
What kind of an idiot would let the woman he loves stay in a place like this ?!
...the day of my colossal fuck-up ...

After the moment of fate, when Gogh finally delivered those hard words of truth...
It's not good to get too attached ...
...if you just want to stay friends...
...I could hear the rattling rush of all the blood in my body draining away in an instant!
Was I even truly myself in that moment?
I almost wonder if I existed in four dimensions at that point in time.
See how ridiculous the previous statement was? THAT'S how panicked and shocked I was when it happened!
squeee

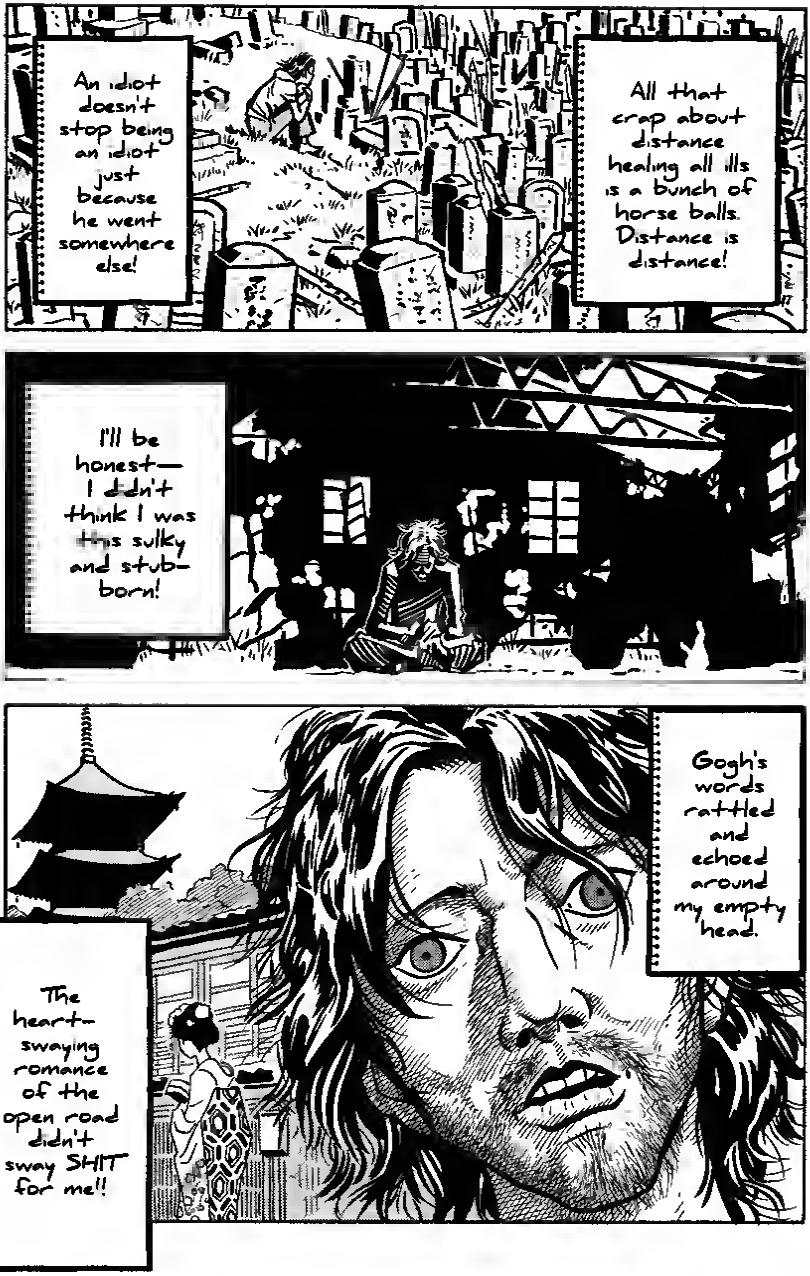

They say a man shows his true colors under duress. Well, it was made perfectly clear that when I came across a situation I couldn't handle, I run from it like a coward.
So in a panicked moment, I chose to simply vanish. I guess I'd have to say I'm surprised at my own reaction...
Aren't you going to stop him, Shoji?
I mean, it was only a matter of time until I recovered my wits.
So I wandered here and there without a destination, like a wayward zombie
ズビビビ

I was like a monster of heat and rage!
My brain, guts and limbs burst into motion like a rocket leaving Earth
This time, my blood exploded throughout my body, like the raging tsunami after the wave pulls back!
Oh yeah?
Freekin' idiot!!
My stupid slip of a tongue had led to a most unlikely and inappropriate declaration of love, and it really screwed up my game!
I had to spring into action! My feet tapped out a hike like a flamenco dance!
Who you callin' an idiot?!
Hey, you!
The waves of anger and mortification at my own lack of propriety and common sense left ma unable to sit still

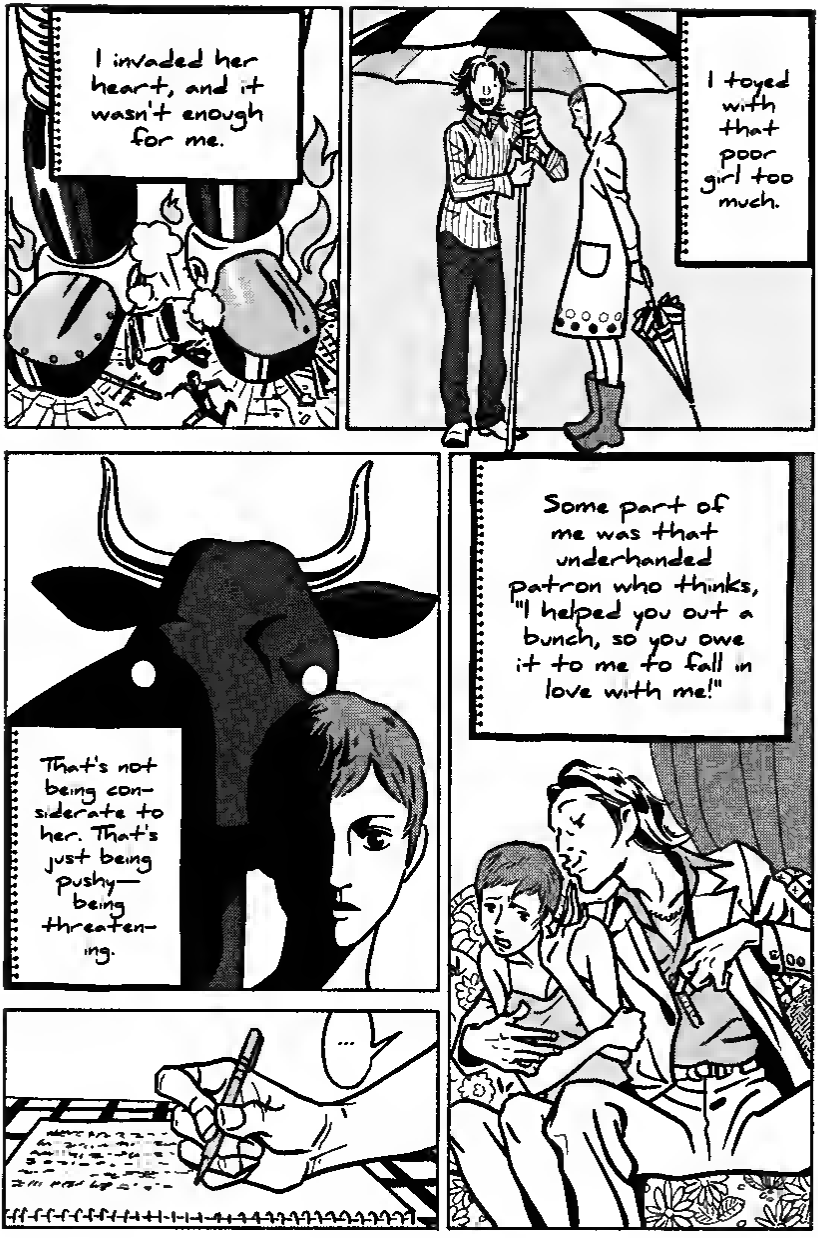

The next thing I knew, I was riding a night train heading to God-knows-where.
It was like the town was trying to purge itself of one sad-sack loser.

It's the PLACE that's the problem! I need a new place... Some-place that I don't know and doesn't know me!

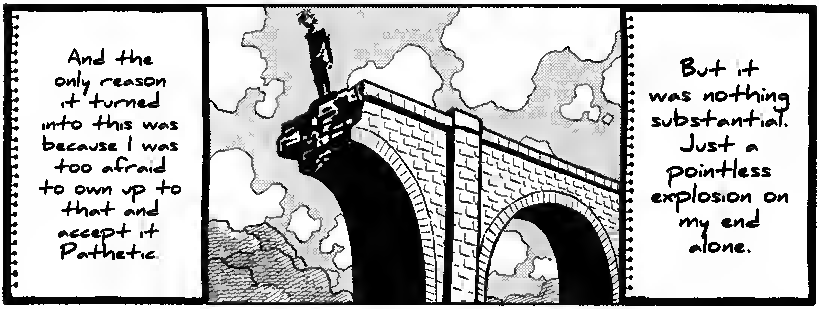
I've been wandering since then.
But...
I figured a good journey would help an idiot forget.

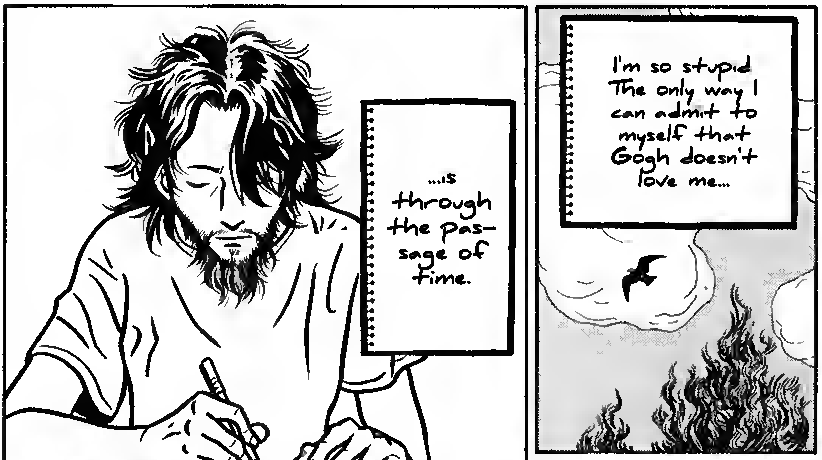

An idiot doesn't stop being an idiot just because he went somewhere else!
All that crap about distance healing all ills is a bunch of horse balls. Distance is distance!
I'll be honest— I didn't think I was this sulky and stubborn!
Gogh's words rattled and echoed around my empty head.
The heart-swaying romance of the open road didn't sway SHIT for me!!

I ain't worth NOTHIN'!
I ain't done NOTHIN' yet!!
Gawd dammit !!
Got so far to go!!
...
BOOM
THUD
So, Shoji!!


I invaded her heart, and it wasn't enough for me.
I toyed with that poor girl too much.
Some part of me was that underhanded patron who thinks, "I helped you out a bunch, so you owe it to me to fall in love with me!"
That's not being considerate to her. That's just being pushy— being threatening.
...

I'll tell you—I was out of my mind for Gogh!


And the only reason it turned into this was because I was too afraid to own up to that and accept it Pathetic
But it was nothing substantial. Just a pointless explosion on my end alone.

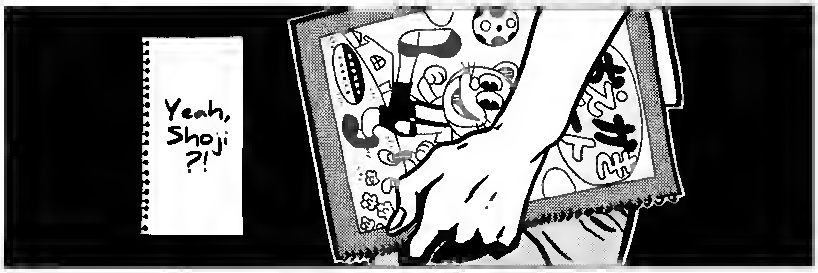

...is through the pas-sage of time.
I'm so stupid The only way I can admit to myself that Gogh doesn't love me...

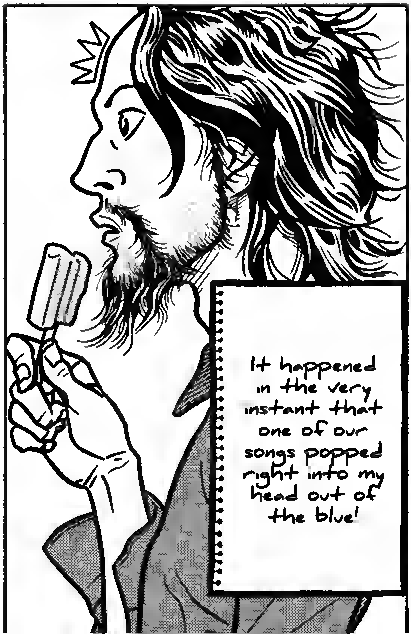
But it's also the manly way to know when to quit and look up at the clouds, ain't it?
Sure, it might be the manly way to woo her until she gives in!
It's time for me to wise up and scope out the new world!
I'm tired of being the sulker. I'm a cumulonimbus man now!
This is for Gogh's sake, my sake... hell, why not humanity's sake as a whole? Ha ha!

Hicc.
Comp me some food, dammit!
飛翔
Ain't that Mitsuo's son? The one from 3rd Street?
Yep.
He went to Tokyo to draw manga, and wound up back home...
Heh ...
...
Oh, no prob-lem!
Sorry about all the noise, fella.

オラオラ!!
オラオラ!!
Could you tell me where the post office is?
Go that way and turn left.
ドドド

It's time to wake up and smell the new world out there!!
That's right. It all starts here.

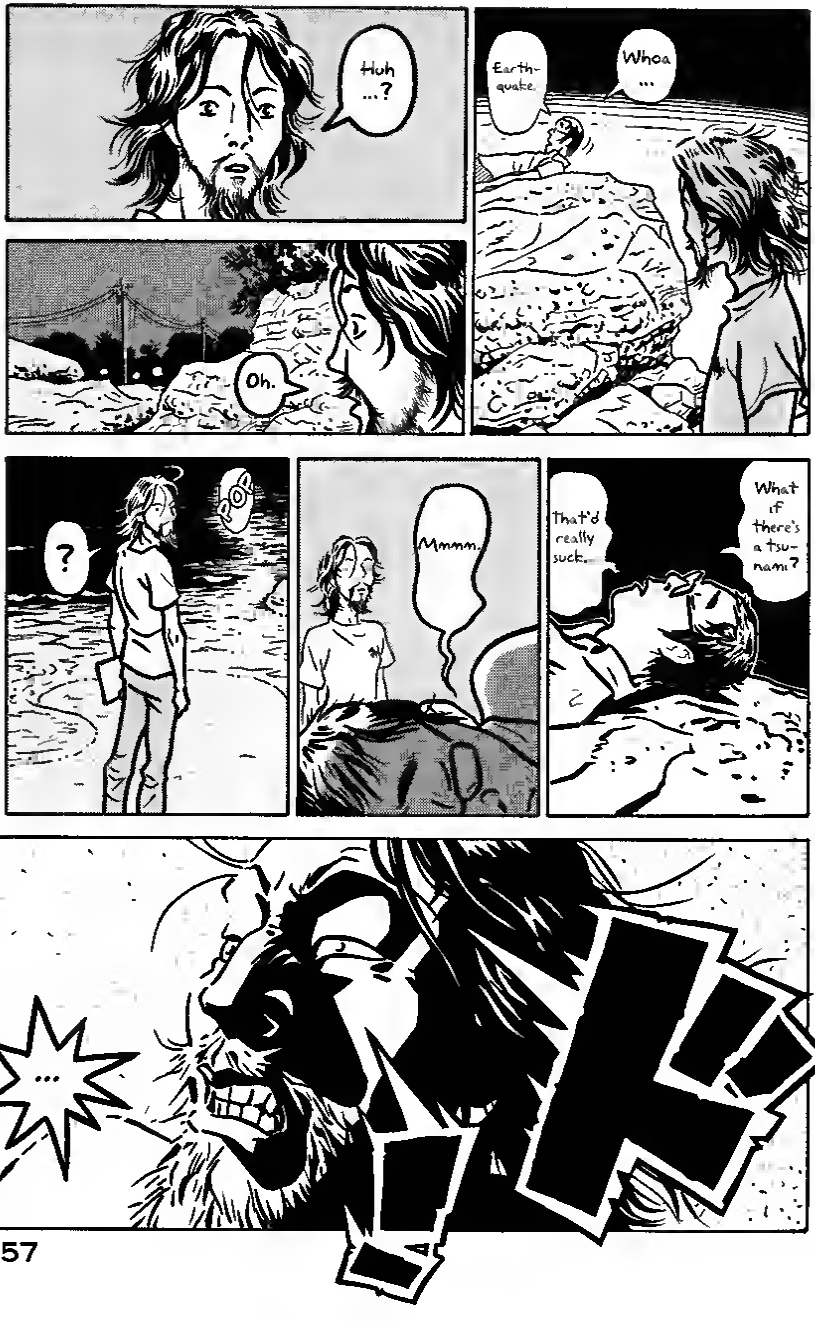

Yeah, Shoji ?!


It happened in the very instant that one of our songs popped right into my head out of the blue!

Even in the midst of my sulking, there was a moment when I felt the plasma run through my backbone, that moment of awareness
I am a dreamin schemin busy-busy man! ♪

We've completely forgotten about the band!
Damn, I feel like playing some music!!
We've still got so much to do with it!!
I think it's time to pick that up again!
* Sign: 300¥ each

Ito Seika
Hell, I'll just go back and tell him to his face.
ピッ
ピッ
ピッ


Huh ...?
Oh.
Whoa ...
Earth-quake.
?
Mmmm.
That'd really suck.
What if there's a tsu-nami?
...

!!

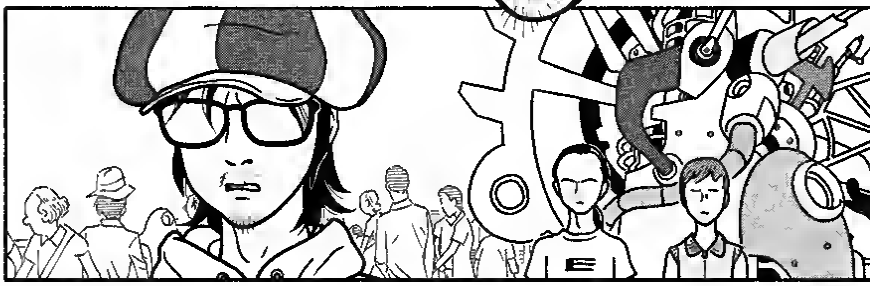
And away we go...
...
Ah, there they are.
...
Up and away !!
Heh... Heh heh.
That's a good one. There's also "Hey, hey, hey!"
Have a good day!
I just may!
Whad-daya say?
Down by the bay!

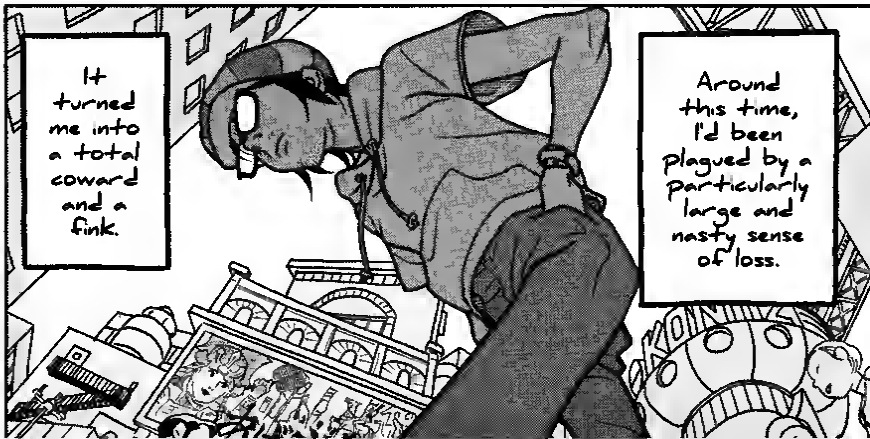
Hallelu-
yay!!
I'll be back soon! Look forward to it!
The night before the revolution,
Saka.

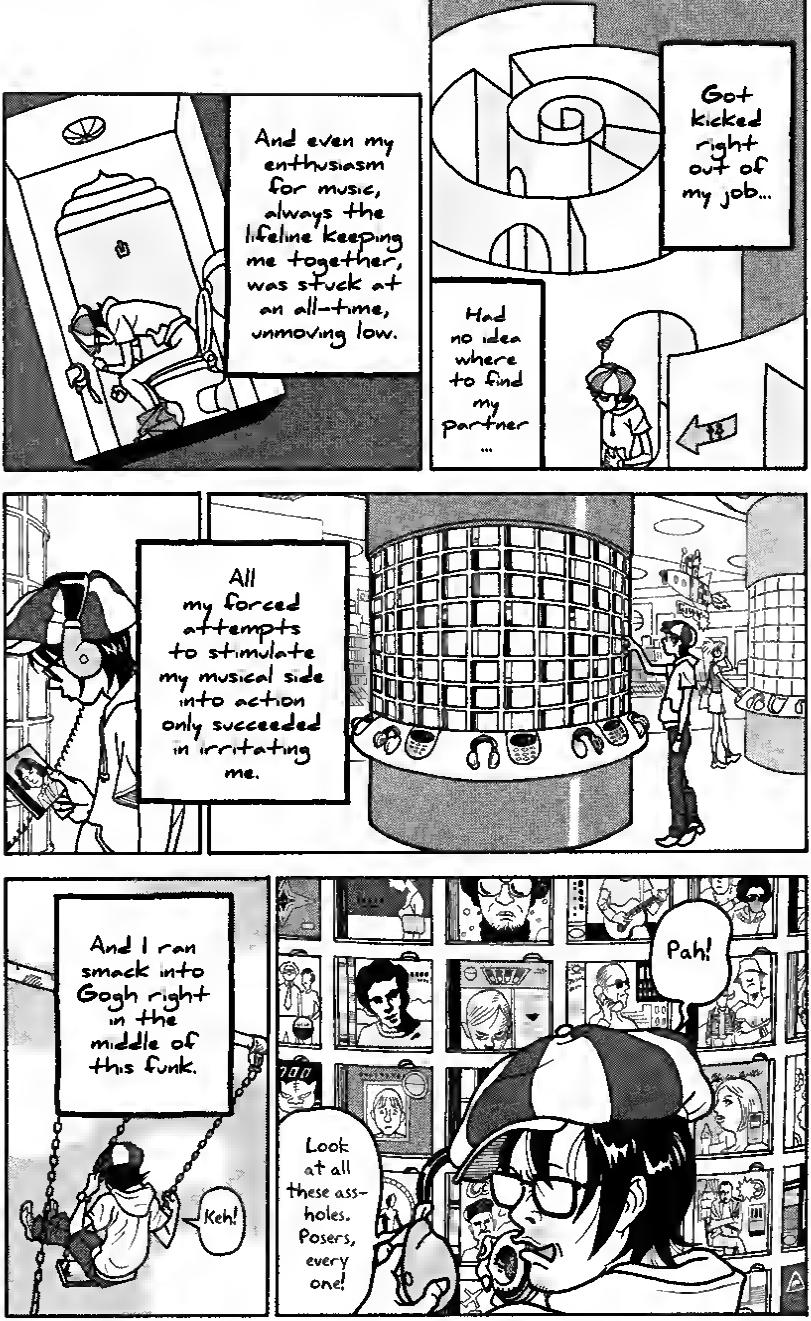
第8話、おわり

CHAPTER 9
RAIN SPARES NO CONSIDERATION

Stupid ...
...sulking coward!



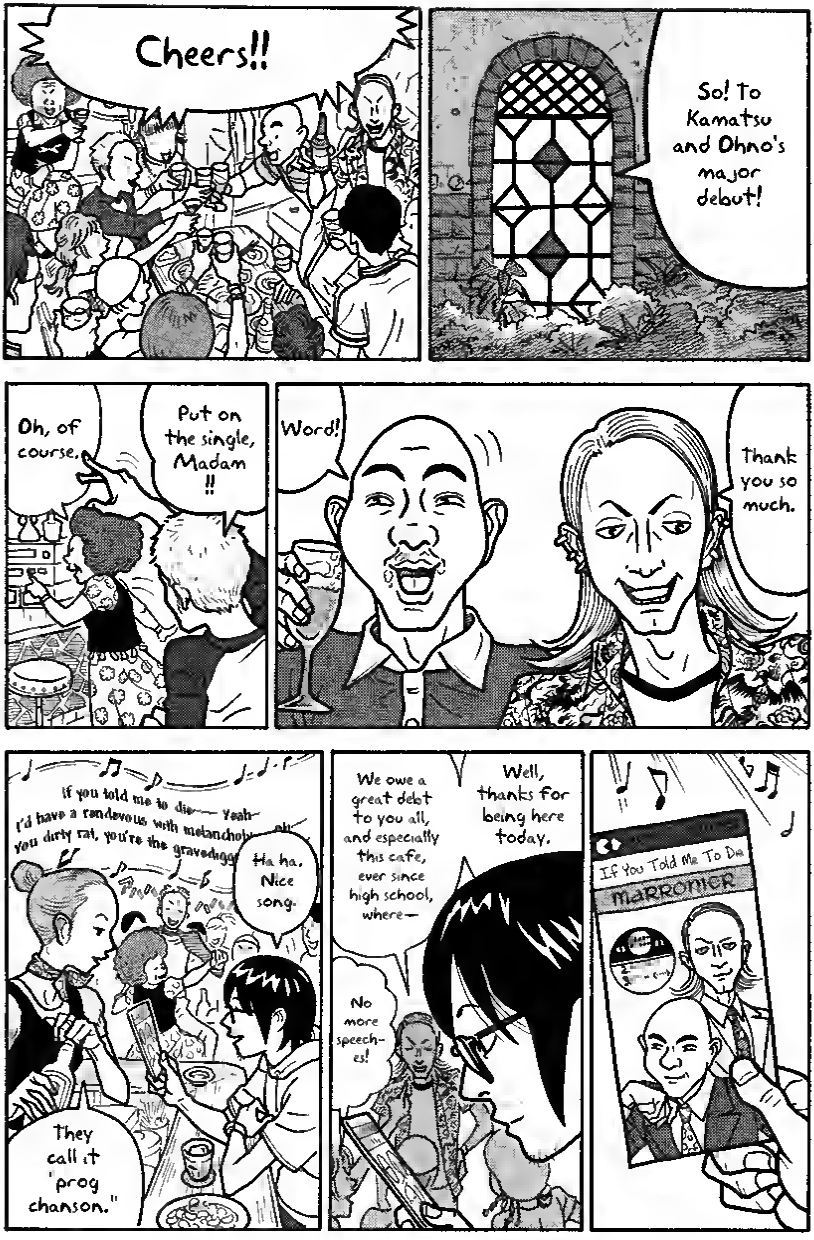

It turned me into a total coward and a fink.
Around this time, I'd been plagued by a particularly large and nasty sense of loss.

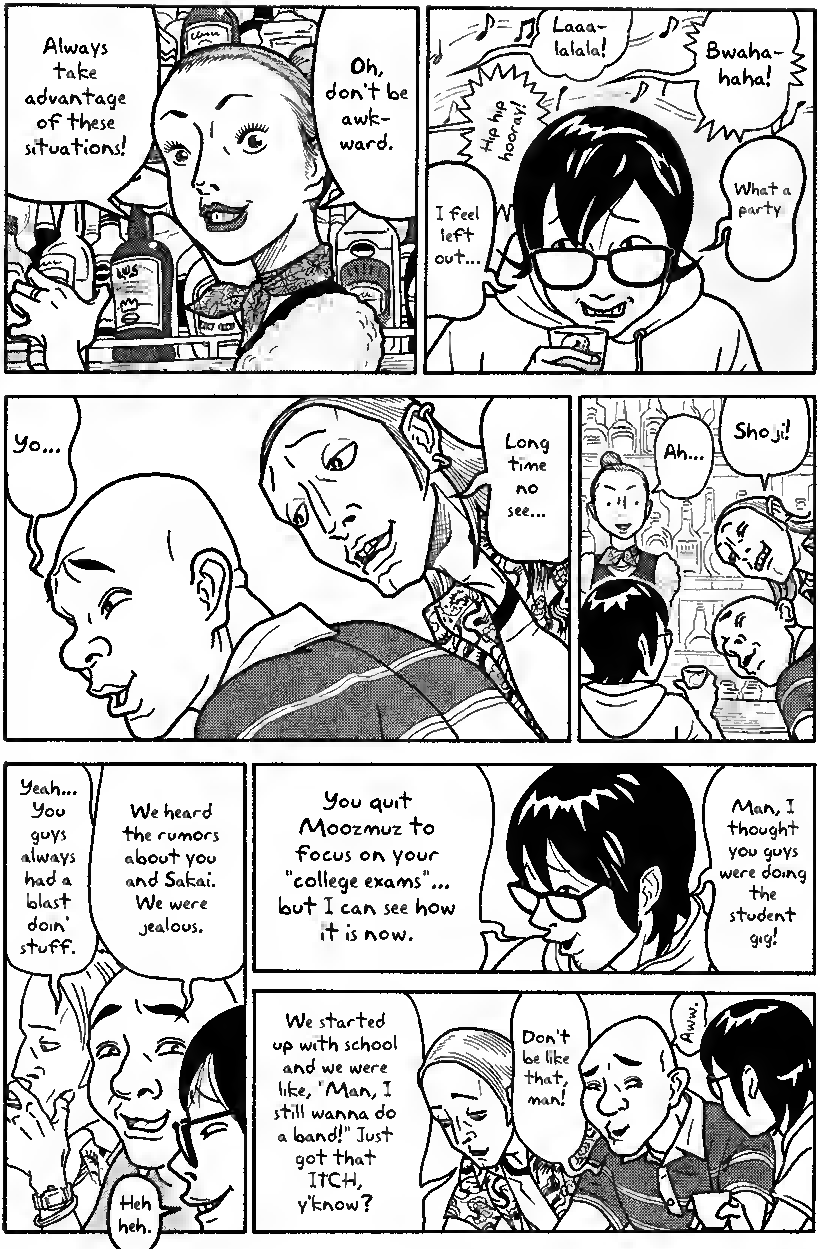

And even my enthusiasm for music, always the lifeline keeping me together, was stuck at an all-time, unmoving low.
Got kicked right out of my job...
Had no idea where to find my partner ...
All my forced attempts to stimulate my musical side into action only succeeded in irritating me.
And I ran smack into Gogh right in the middle of this funk.
Keh!
Look at all these ass-holes. Posers, every one!
Pah!

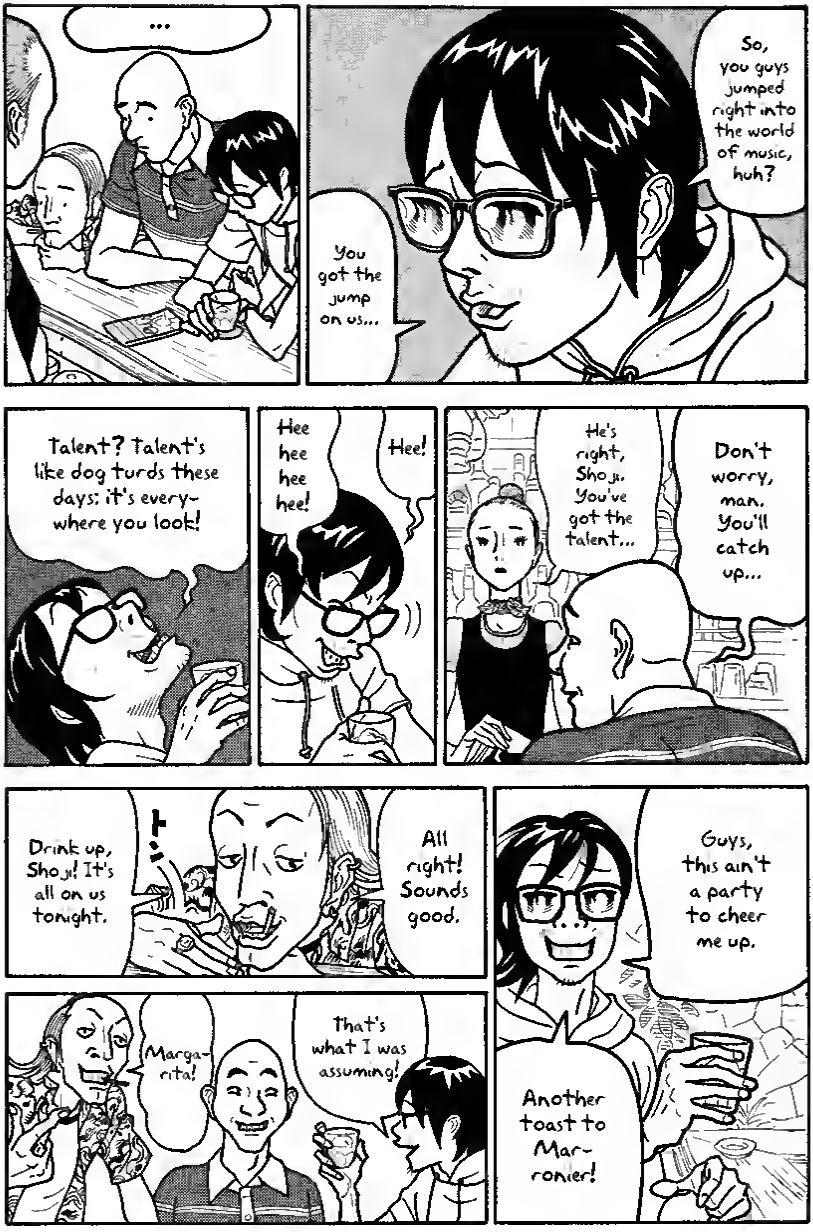
Gogh has already found a new partner, someone she is taking to the next stage.
It was the last person I wanted to show the last part of me I wanted shown...
Shoji...
Yeah right!
And how is... Sakai?
It sucks to have that special person feeling pity for you. It's really harsh...
It was the look when you realiee that someone had robbed your house while you were away
And the look on her face when I said it...
My cheap, worthless pride spit out a sarcastic response...
What do you mean, you GUESS?
"He's fine, I'm guessing!"

Stop taking things out on other people!
Don't be such an idiot!
Huh?
Oh.
The way you snapped at her ...
Let a guy cross the road once in your life!
C'mon, dick!
Don't look at him

Is that Shoji?
Oh my goodness!
本日貸し切り
本日貸し切り
That's too bad.
All sold out?
Hi, ma'am.
I haven't seen you since graduation!
?
Huh?
Oh... Shoji...
Ah!
Huh? You mean you weren't invited to the party?
Hey, everyone! Shoji's here!
Party? What party?

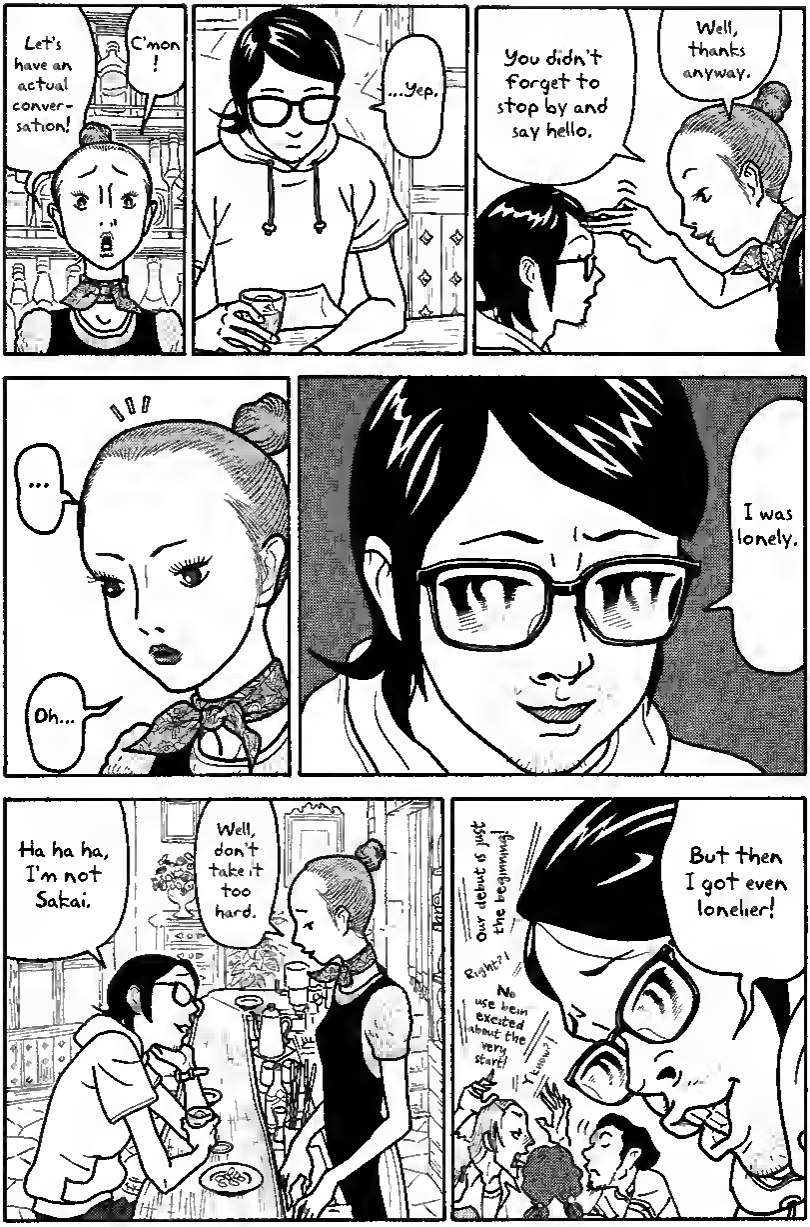

Cheers!!
So! To Kamatsu and Ohno's major debut!
Oh, of course.
Put on the single, Madam !!
Word!
Thank you so much.
If you told me to die— Yeah— I'd have a rendevous with melancholy— you dirty rat, you're the gravedigger
Ha ha. Nice song.
They call it "prog chanson."
We owe a great debt to you all, and especially this cafe, ever since high school, where—
Well, thanks for being here today.
No more speech-es!
If You Told Me To Die
MARRONIER


Always take advantage of these situations!
Oh, don't be awk-ward.
Laaa-lalala!
Bwaha-haha!
Hip hip hooray!
I feel left out...
What a party
Yo...
Long time no see...
Ah...
Shoji!
Yeah... You guys always had a blast doin' stuff.
We heard the rumors about you and Sakai. We were jealous.
Heh heh.
You quit Moozmuz to focus on your "college exams"... but I can see how it is now.
Man, I thought you guys were doing the student gig!
We started up with school and we were like, 'Man, I still wanna do a band!' Just got that ITCH, y'know?
Don't be like that, man!
Awww.

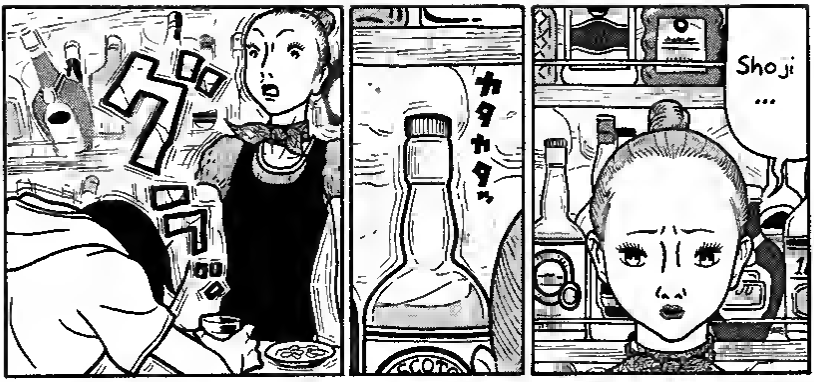

...
So, you guys jumped right into the world of music, huh?
You got the jump on us...
Talent? Talent's like dog turds these days; it's everywhere you look!
Hee hee hee hee!
Hee!
He's right, Shoji. You've got the talent...
Don't worry, man. You'll catch up...
Drink up, Shoji! It's all on us tonight.
トン
All right! Sounds good.
Guys, this ain't a party to cheer me up.
Marga-rita!
That's what I was assuming!
Another toast to Mar-ronier!

Zackly.
Right?!
See, th' thing is...the market won't follow along if y'just do whatever you want!
Pop music is a business, see?
You gotta play along by the rules if you wanna have any success. Gotta compromise to stay alive!
You can't make a living on a hobby.
All right, we're leaving.
Seeya!
Cafe
I ain't talkin' shit, Shoji! I'm just sayin'!
Oh, whoops.
I know.
Way too overboard in terms of character! Layin' it on too thick!
See, that's where our OLD BAND was just too naive.
I get it!

You haven't been around in ages.
...
...
Yep...
Yep...
And you're not with Sakai today.
I just saw Elvis at the mini-mart.
Yep...
Hey!
You mind actually TALKIN' to me?
ゲッ...
Uh... sure...


Let's have an actual conversation!
C'mon!
...Yep.
You didn't forget to stop by and say hello.
Well, thanks anyway.
...
Oh...
I was lonely.
Ha ha ha, I'm not Sakai.
Well, don't take it too hard.
But then I got even lonelier!
Our debut is just the beginning!
Right?!
No use bein excited about the very start!
Yuuwa?

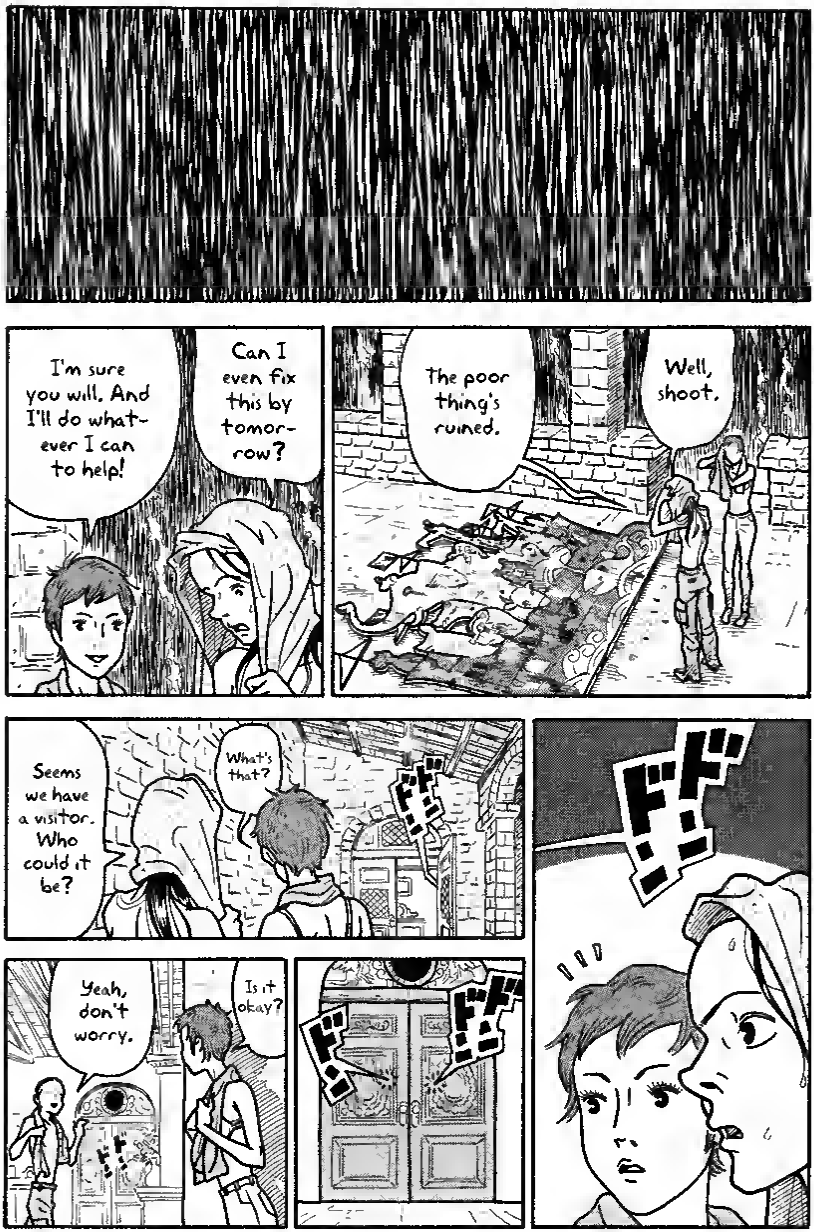
But you HAVE to keep doing it!
I love the songs you write!
Well, that's open to interpretation at the moment.
But you're still doing Moozmuz with him, right?
H-huh ...?


Shoji
...
カタカタ
ゲラゲラ

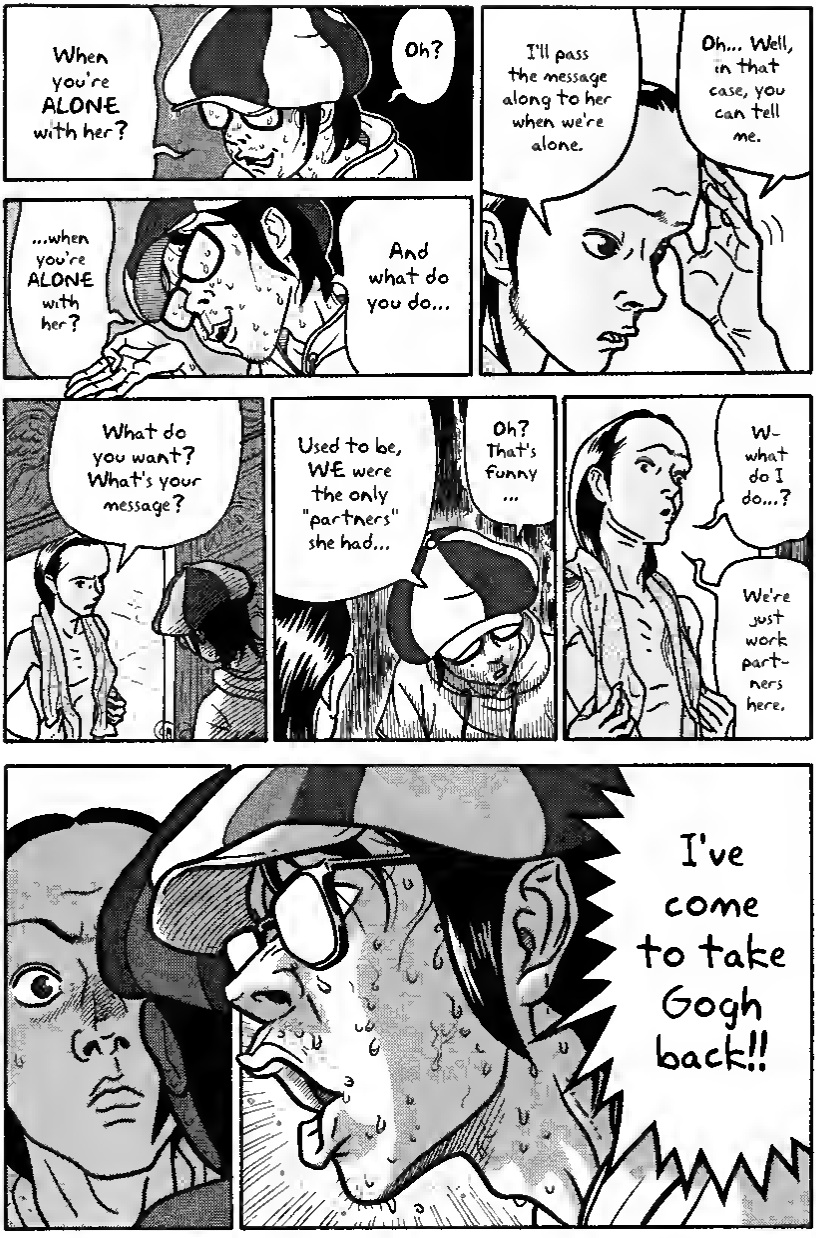
ゲラゲラゲラ

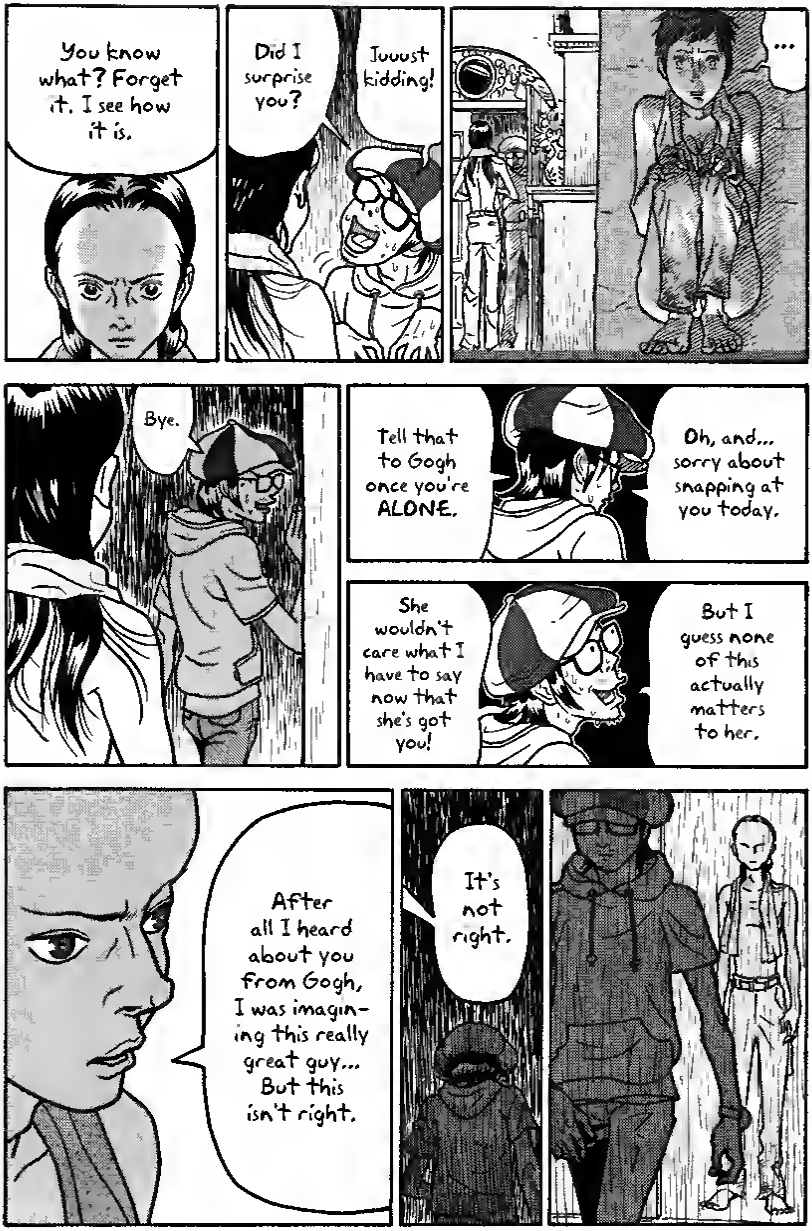
...
Ow ow ow!
I'm gonna go, Tako.
Huh?
That was a big one...
...
...
Shoji!

What, feeling sorry for yourself for being left behind?!
A large and nasty sense of loss!!
Don't cry!
Everything that's important to you!
Is this how everything's going to change?! Is this how everything's going to end?!
You coward !!


Can I even fix this by tomorrow?
I'm sure you will. And I'll do whatever I can to help!
Well, shoot.
The poor thing's ruined.
What's that?
Seems we have a visitor. Who could it be?
ドドン
ドドン
Is it okay?
Yeah, don't worry.

Hello? Who's ...
Oh...
The guy from-
It's Shoji!
there?
Is, uh...
Gogh there?
Umm... Yeah, but... she's kinda busy right now.
No, that won't be necessary.
If you could just call her right here...
I need to talk to her...
Well, come on in, then.
I told you, it's not that big of a deal!
But... you're soaking wet, man. You should really come in...


When you're ALONE with her?
Oh?
I'll pass the message along to her when we're alone.
Oh... Well, in that case, you can tell me.
...when you're ALONE with her?
And what do you do...
What do you want? What's your message?
Used to be, WE were the only "partners" she had...
Oh? That's funny ...
W-what do I do...?
We're just work partners here.
I've come to take Gogh back!!


You know what? Forget it. I see how it is.
Did I surprise you?
Juuust kidding!
...
Bye.
Tell that to Gogh once you're ALONE.
Oh, and... sorry about snapping at you today.
She wouldn't care what I have to say now that she's got you!
But I guess none of this actually matters to her.
After all I heard about you from Gogh, I was imagining this really great guy... But this isn't right.
It's not right.

...
It's so disappointing to find out what you're REALLY like.
And what would you know?
No, Elm...
What the FUCK would YOU know about us?!

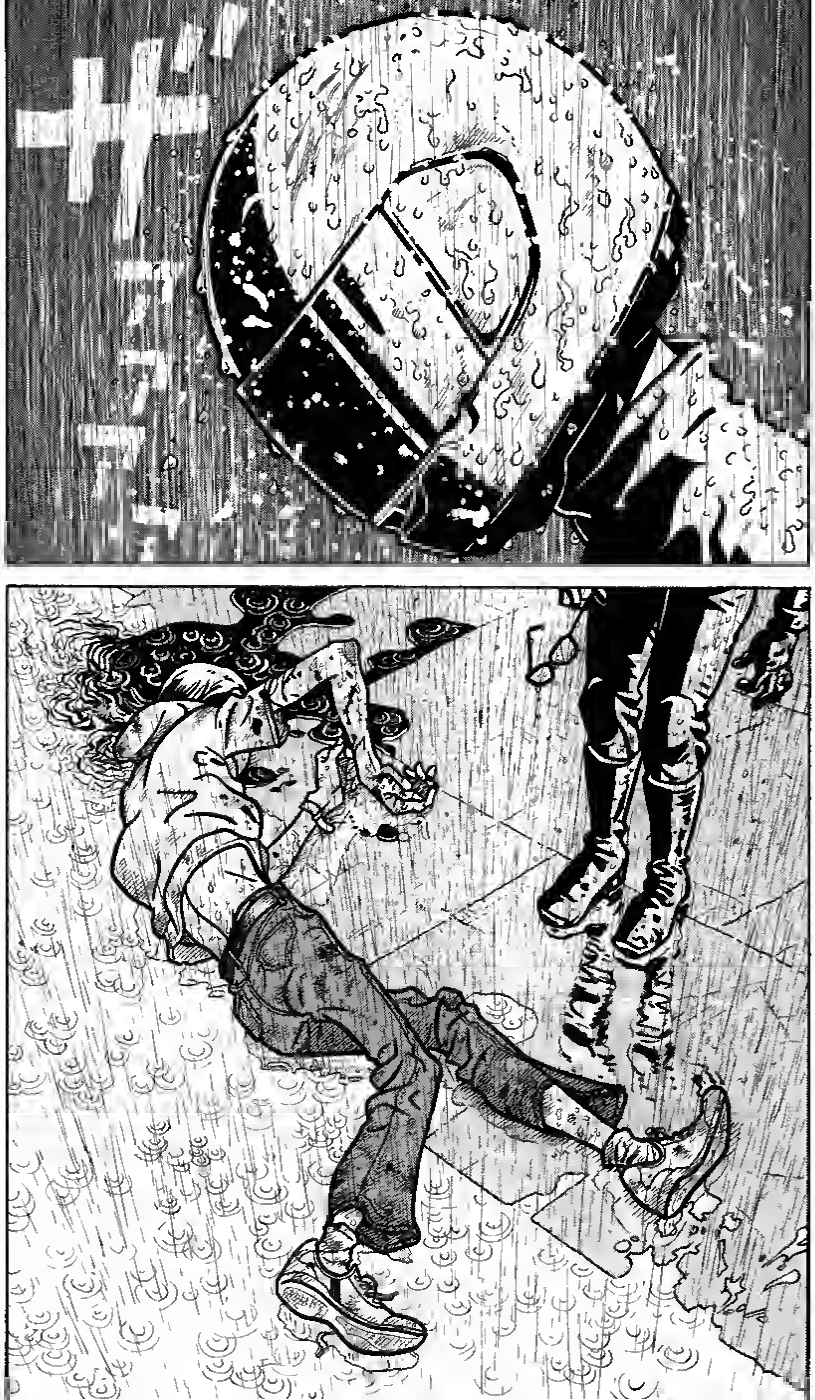
Stop it!!
Shoji...
Hff.
Hff
Hff.
Hff
I...
I'm ...

Hff.
Hff.
...
I'm not going back...

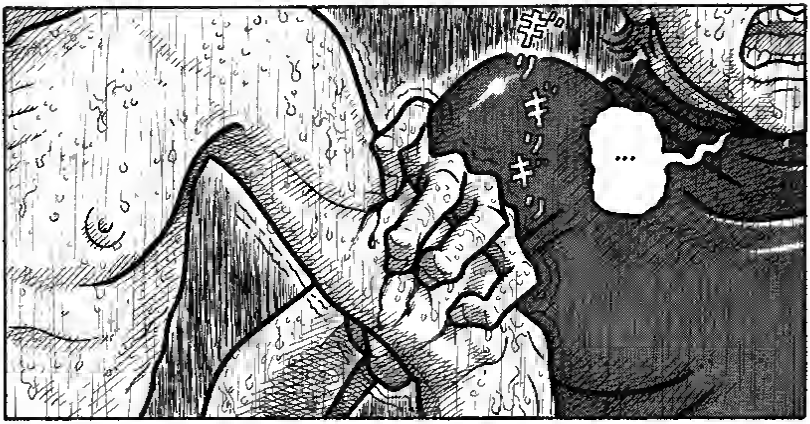
This is what I was afraid of.
Yeah, I get it.
...and I saw the last combination of people I wanted to see. It freaked me out, so I responded badly.
I felt the shame of having exposed a side of me I didn't want seen ...
This is the source of that loss!
That Gogh would choose not Sakai... and CER-TAINLY not me...
...but some other dashing prince...
...and wind up far, far away from us...

Because then, in that exact moment...
...a very, very precious period of my life would come swiftly and irreparably to a close!!

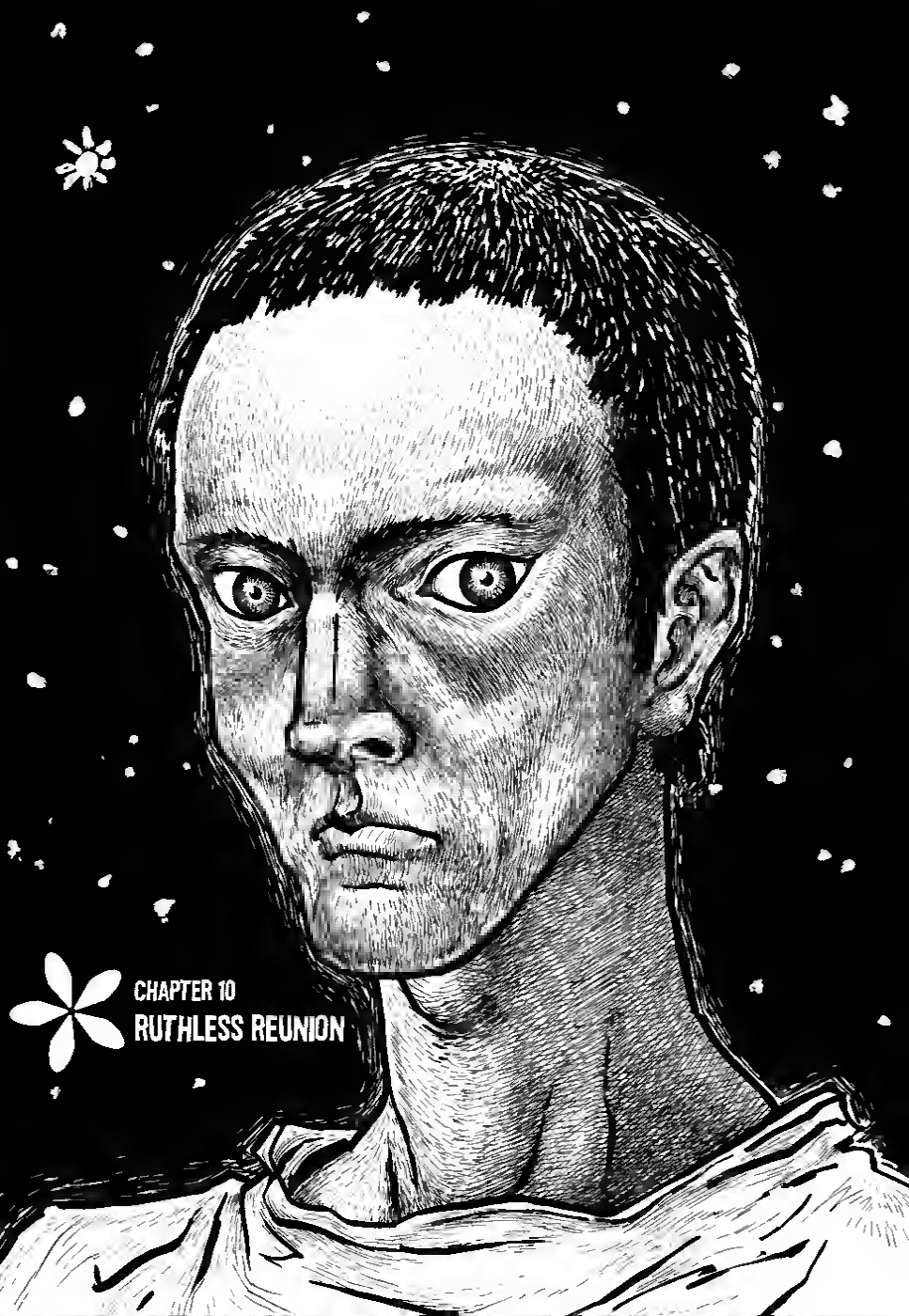
It's OVER !!
Who am I kid-ding?
Well, shit!!
I was head over heels for her...
It's ALLLL over!!
!
キキキ



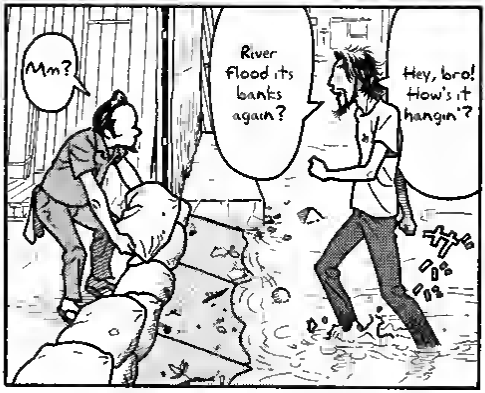
ガクガクガク
ガクッ…
!!
!
Oh
…
グイッ
Oh
…
!!


ギリギリ
…

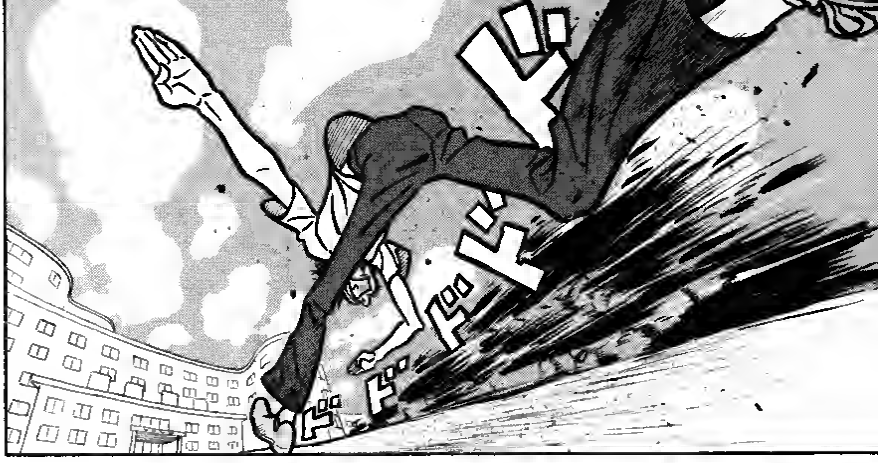
It hurts…
God, it hurts… Sakai…
第9話 おわり


CHAPTER 10
RUTHLESS REUNION

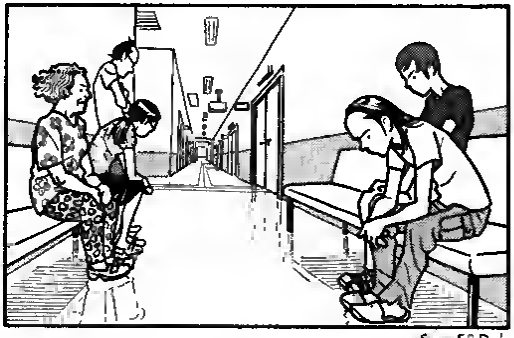
Sign: Wood, Plywood, Construction Materials - Sakai Lumber



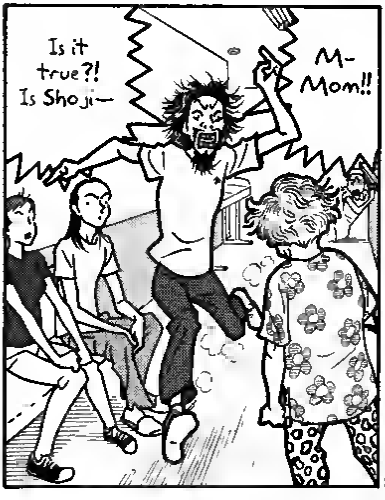
You didn't hear?!
Hear what?
Where? Well...
Out and about on a solitary journey, I suppose.
What, did he get run over by a motorcycle or something?
Heh? Shoji, huh?
Shoji's in bad shape, man!
Huh?
?
Uh—
So you heard, I guess...

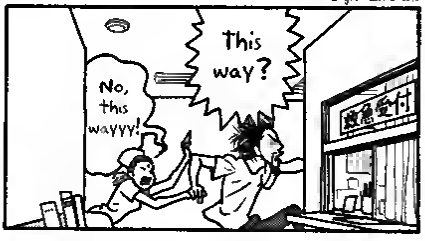

ドドドドド

Where is he?!



Sign: ER Desk

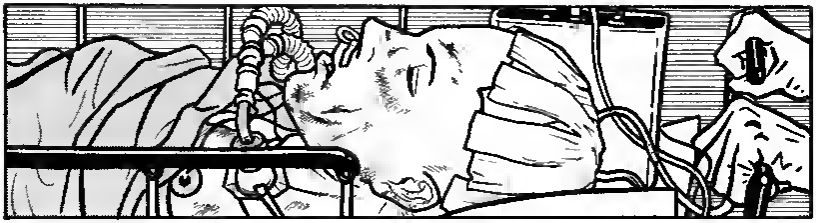

Is it true?! Is Shoji—
M-Mom!!


This way?
No, this wayyy!
救急受付

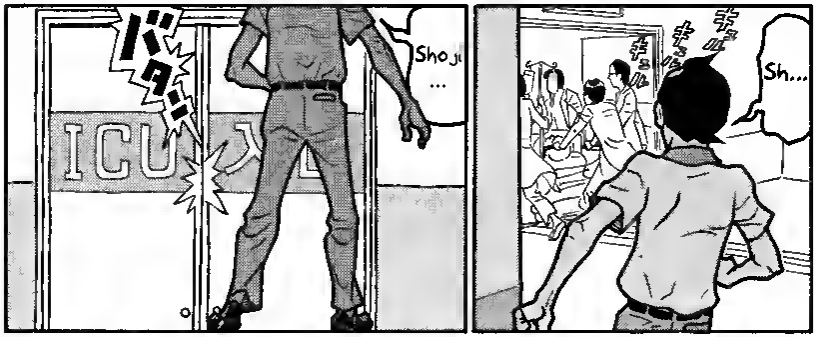
Oh! THERE!
Aack!
救急受付

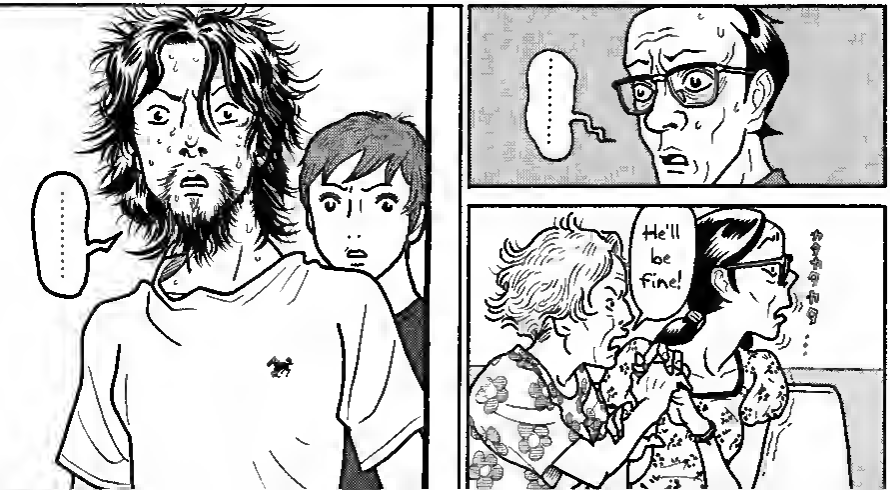
Ma'am ...
Sir...
Be quiet! He's in surgery!!
Uh... uhh ...
Ah...
ボリ ボリ ボリ
Can't be serious...
The foolish boy. Probably walking without paying attention to where he was going...
Yerm...
Hey... Gogh ...
H...
Sakai ...

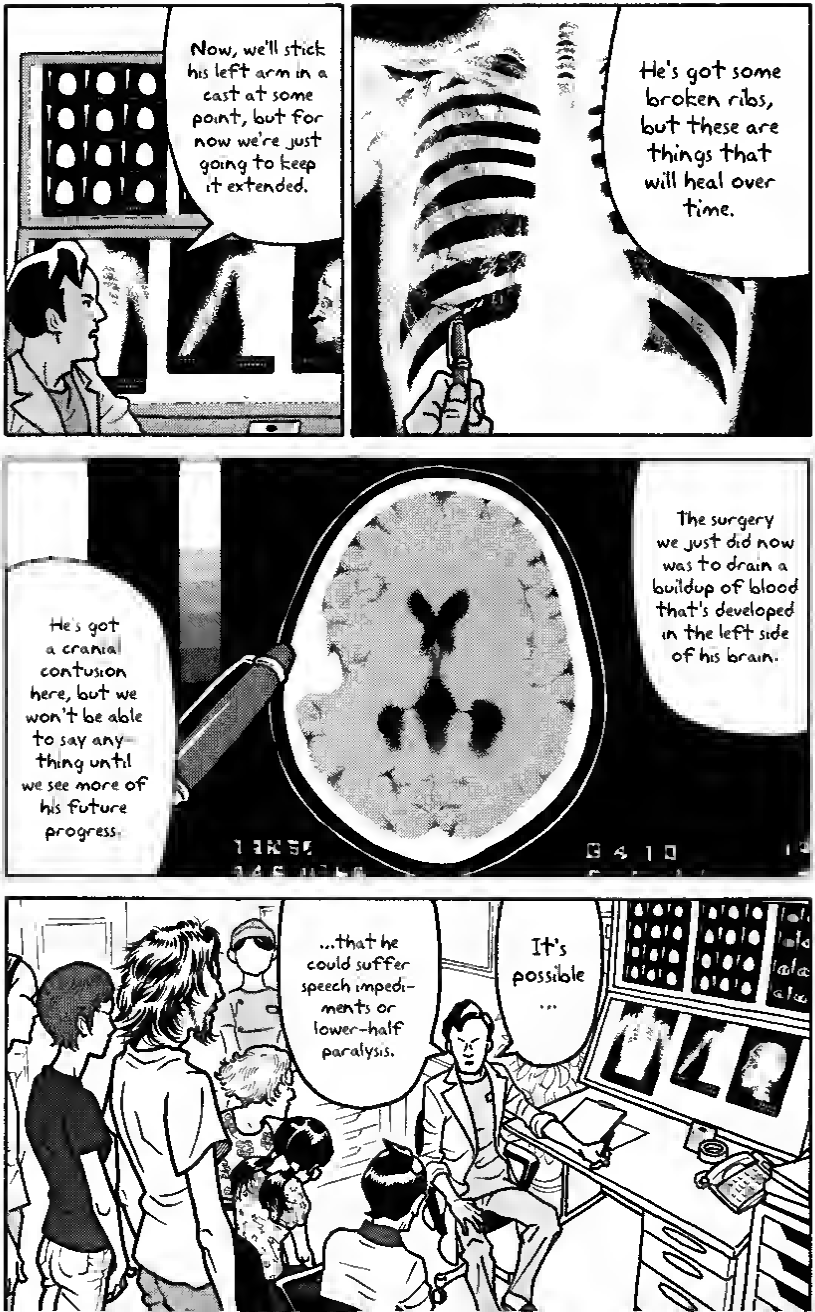
……
コクッ
?……
コク……
!!
バ…ッ
R00!

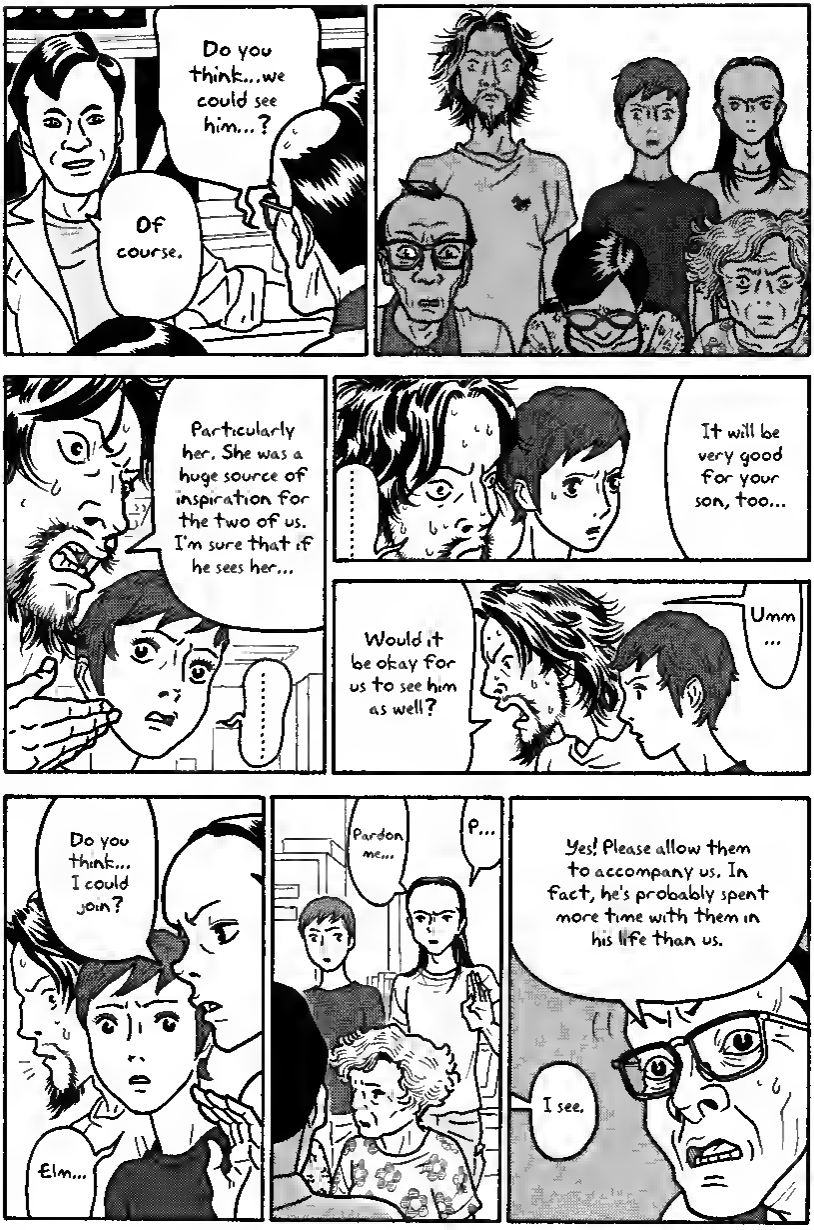


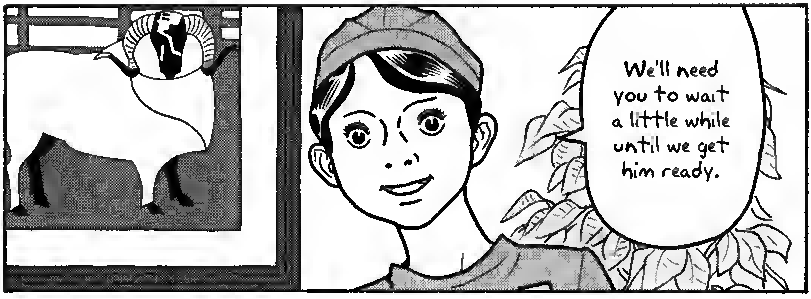
キュル
キュル
キュル

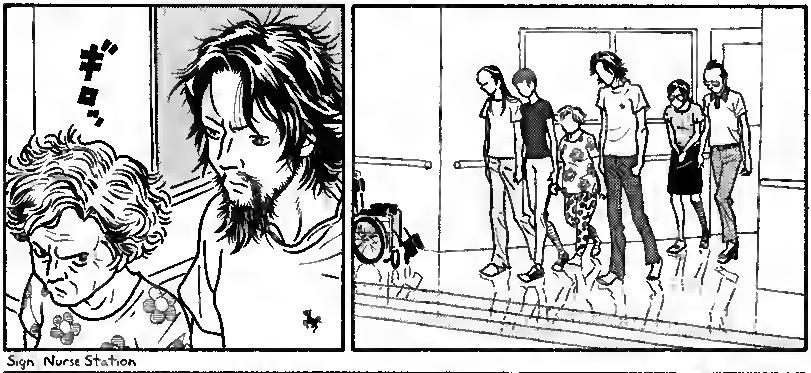

バタン
ICU
Shoji...
キュル
キュル
Sh...


……
……
He'll be fine!

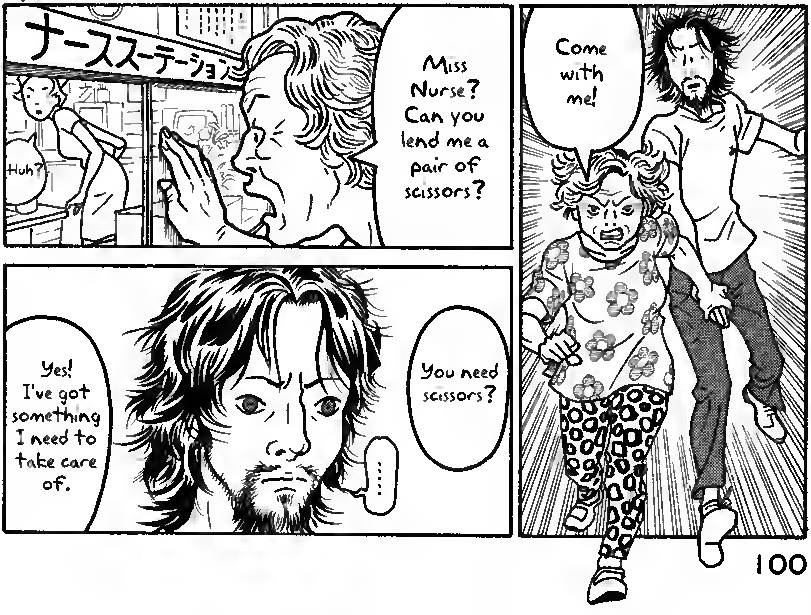

Now, we'll stick his left arm in a cast at some point, but for now we're just going to keep it extended.
He's got some broken ribs, but these are things that will heal over time.
He's got a cranial contusion here, but we won't be able to say anything until we see more of his future progress.
The surgery we just did now was to drain a buildup of blood that's developed in the left side of his brain.
...that he could suffer speech impediments or lower-half paralysis.
It's possible ...


Do you think...we could see him...?
Of course.
Particularly her. She was a huge source of inspiration for the two of us. I'm sure that if he sees her...
It will be very good for your son, too...
Would it be okay for us to see him as well?
Umm...
Do you think... I could join?
Eh...
Pardon me...
P...
Yes! Please allow them to accompany us. In fact, he's probably spent more time with them in his life than us.
I see.



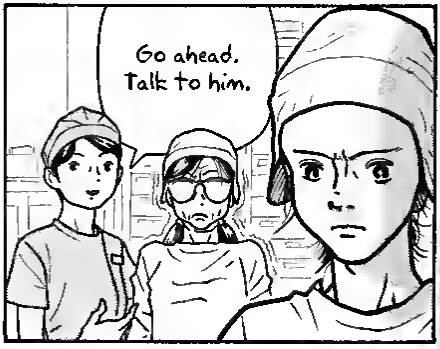


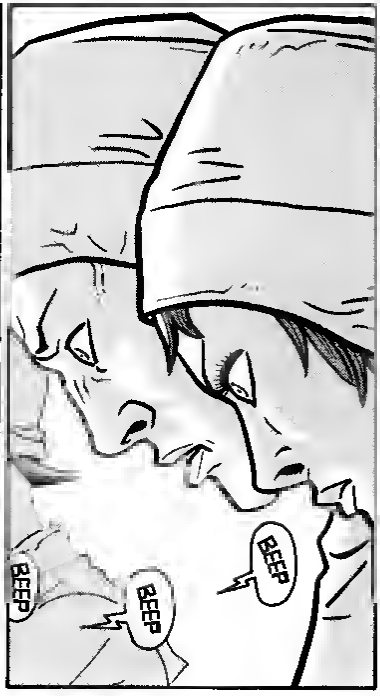
Sign Nurse Station

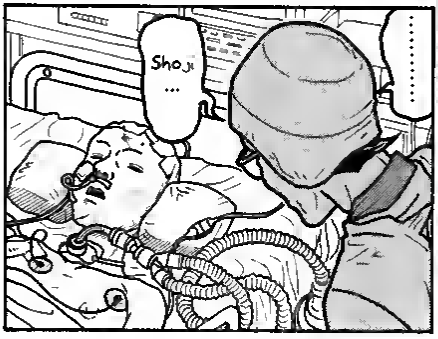

ナースステーション
Huh?
Miss Nurse? Can you lend me a pair of scissors?
Come with me!
You need scissors?
……
Yes! I've got something I need to take care of.

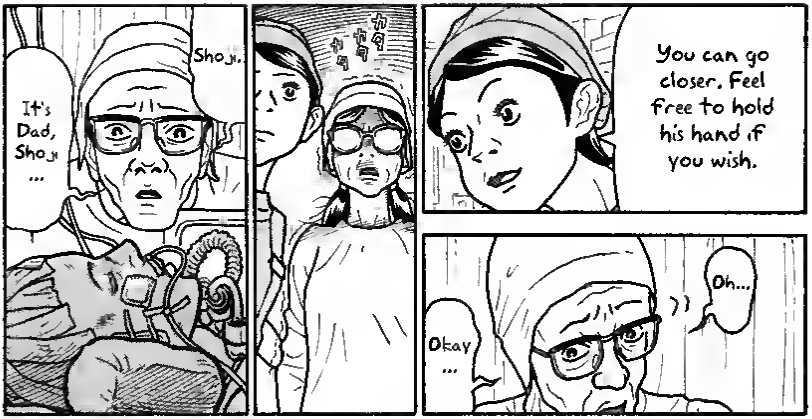
I mean, how senseless can you be?!
This is a hospital! We don't need you rushing in, greasy and dirty, spreading germs everywhere!
Look at you! You're filthy!
Try to think of Shoji's sake!!
.....
The boy is fighting for his life right now...
...and you're going to see him looking like you ran away from the circus?!

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

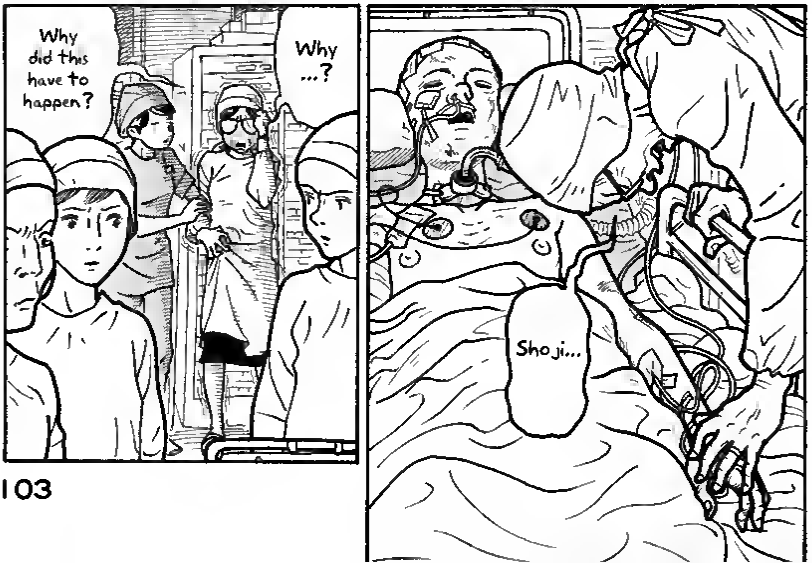

Go ahead.
Talk to him.


BEEP
BEEP
BEEP


Shoji
...
.....

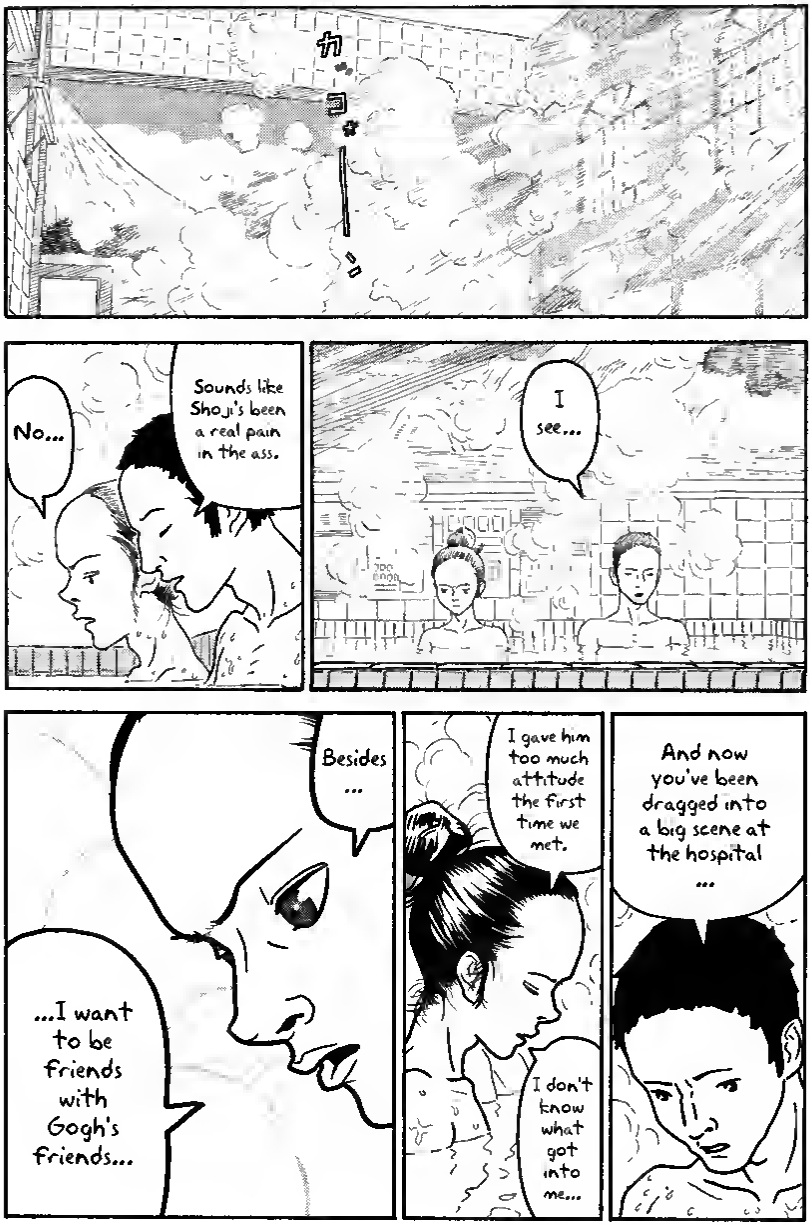

Shoji.
It's Dad, Shoji ...
カタ カタ
You can go closer. Feel free to hold his hand if you wish.
Oh...
Okay ...

Can you hear me...?


Why did this have to happen?
Why ...?
Shoji...

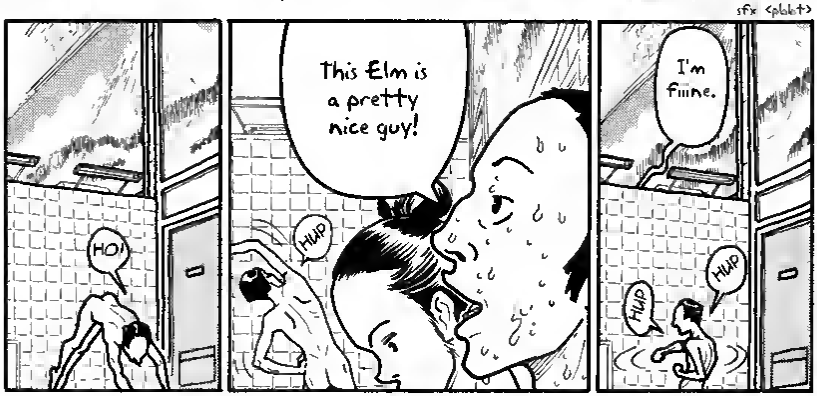
Why did this have to happen to MY baby?!
Ma'am! It's all right, ma'am!
Why? Why?! Why MY son?!
It's going to be fine.
AAAAHH!!!
AAHH!!
.....

Oh, no...
You must be tired, dear.
I've got some coupons to the bathhouse. Why don't you go?
Oh, here.
You poor things have been on edge since it happened last night.
Maybe I cut it a bit too short...
Err...
I mean, I just can't be stuck downwind from this filth-ball all day.
And if you say you'll go, I know he'll go with you.


No...
Sounds like Shoji's been a real pain in the ass.
I see...
Besides ...
...I want to be friends with Gogh's friends...
I gave him too much attitude the first time we met.
I don't know what got into me...
And now you've been dragged into a big scene at the hospital ...

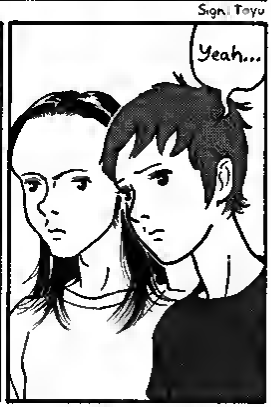
Hey, Gogh! You aren't getting lightheaded, are you?
Whuss
……

sfx <plak+>

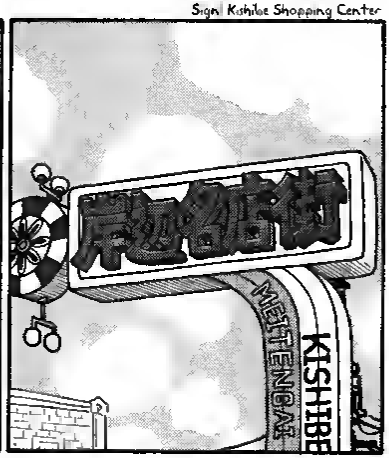

HO!
HUP
This Elm is a pretty nice guy!
HUP
I'm fiine.
HUP
HUP

……

Sign: Toyu



Sign: Kishibe Shopping Center



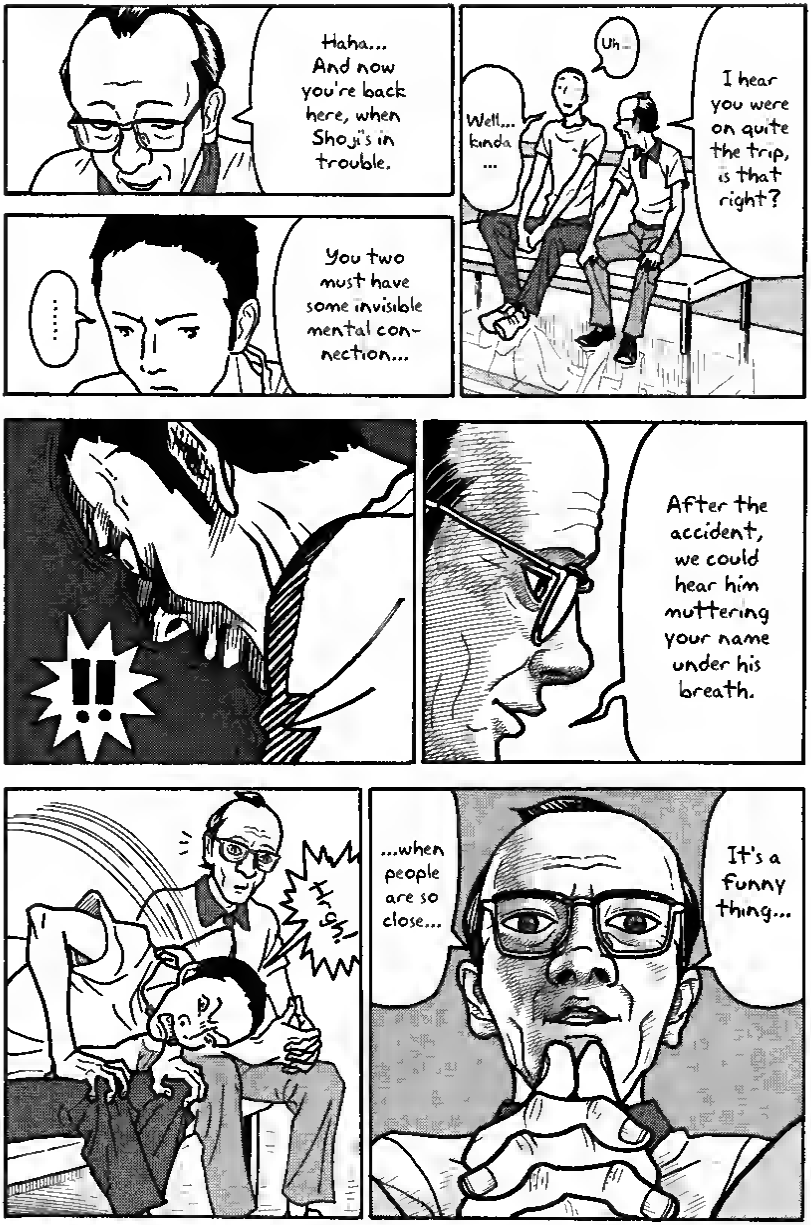
Shoji!
It's me, Sakai! I'm back, man!
ヒク!!
Shoji !!
SQUISH
We're having a major sale on appliances today!!
Step right up! Find something you like!
I'm sorry, Shoji...

But, Shoji...
Is it... true...?
I...
I freaked, man...
ギュ
Aren't they?!
Aren't they cute?!
Hyahahaha! Look at those plushies!
Aren't...
they...

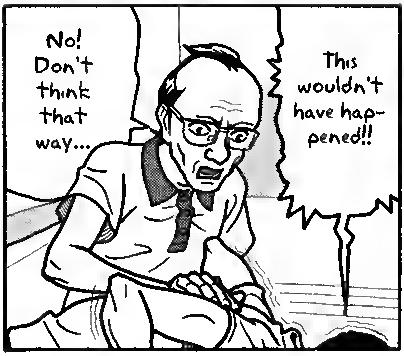
Yeah...
S-s-suh-sorry! Wrong guy!! Hee hee!
Dwaah!
Hey, I'm right here.
Oh my God, that was so scary!
Dumb-ass.
TOYS
ダッ

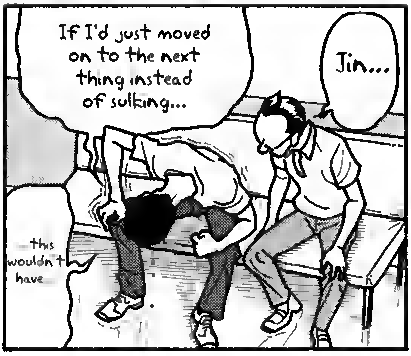
Are you gonna be in time for the performance tonight?!
Elm! No slacking off, dammit!!
Eep!
Watch out, don't step in the paint!
What kind of cheek is that?!
Wh—
Sorry! You can chew me out later!
You utter slobs!
ボリボリボリ
Gaaargh!
Heeheel Sounds like he's growing some balls.
Did you hear that? Elm just talked back to Mr. Kazama!

Oh... it's you, Jin.
Your mother is with her. To tell the truth, I'm glad she's with us. She's been a rock.
She went home...
Where's his mom?
That's good...
Whewww.
And Shoji ...?
It sounds like he's stable for now ...
Well ...

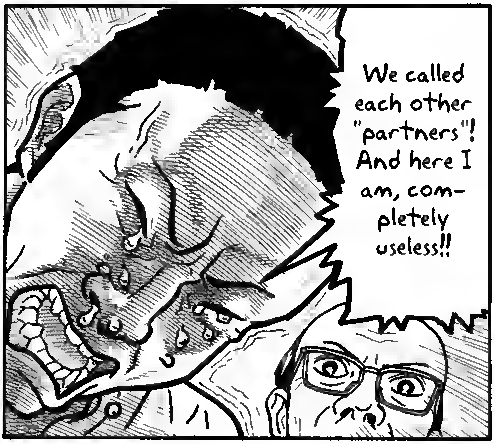

Haha... And now you're back here, when Shoji's in trouble.
Uh-
Well... kinda ...
I hear you were on quite the trip, is that right?
You two must have some invisible mental connection...
!!
After the accident, we could hear him muttering your name under his breath.
...when people are so close...
It's a funny thing...

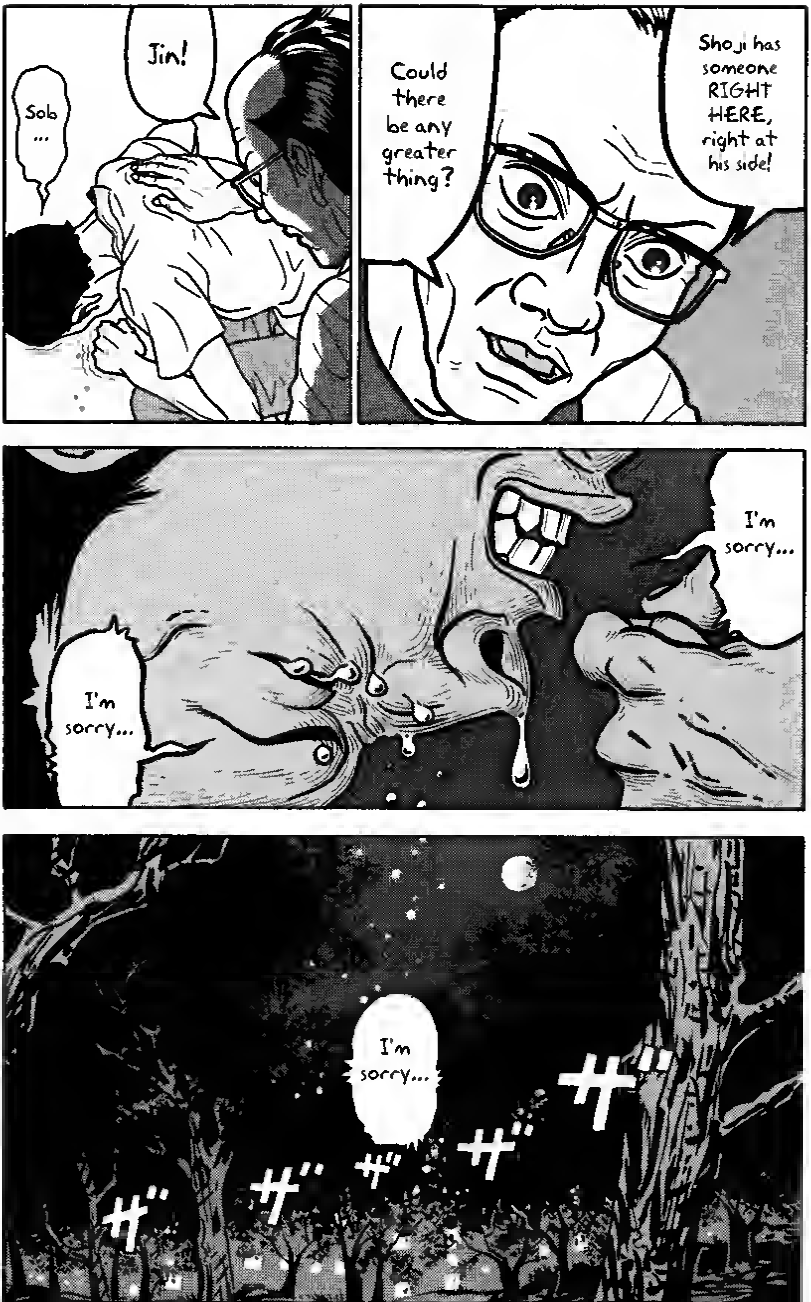
I'm sorry, sir!
This is my fault!

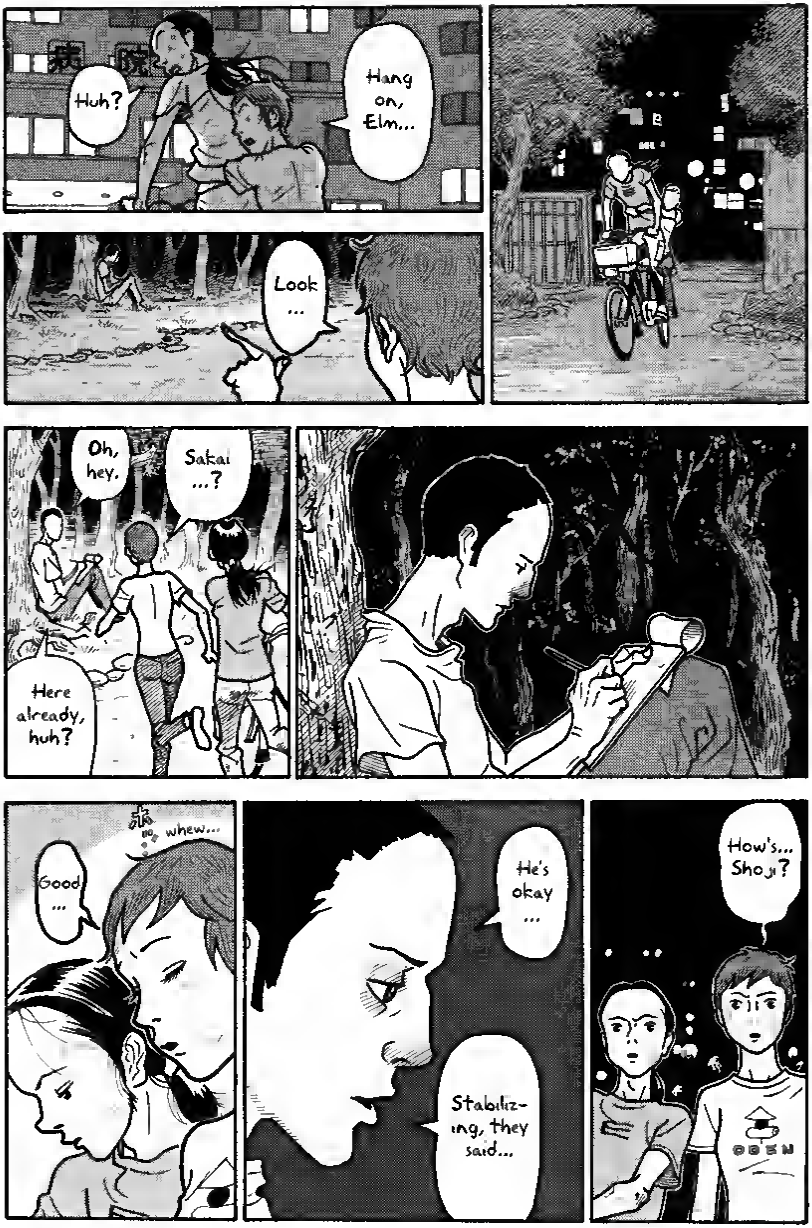

No! Don't think that way...
This wouldn't have happened!!


If I'd just moved on to the next thing instead of sulking...
Jin...
this wouldn't have

Jin! It's only because YOU'RE HERE that Shoji is trying to pull through!
Jin!


We called each other "partners"! And here I am, completely useless!!


Jin!
Sob ...
Could there be any greater thing?
Shoji has someone RIGHT HERE, right at his side!
I'm sorry...
I'm sorry...
I'm sorry...


Huh?
Hang on, Elm...
Look ...
Oh, hey.
Sakai ...?
Here already, huh?
How's... Shoji?
He's okay ...
Stabiliz- ing, they said...
whew...
Good ...

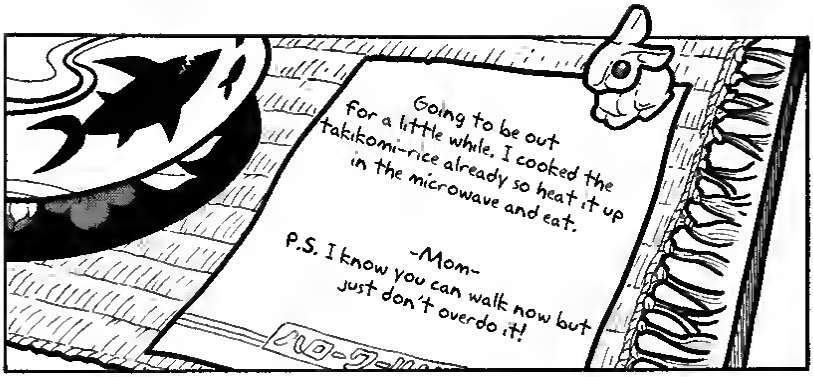
He's been crying.
Heh...
Not much ...
So...
What-cha doing?
I figured I owed Shoji something for when he comes to.
Oooh.
I was coming up with some lyrics... for a new Moozmuz song.
I hope you don't think this is me being inappro-priate...
Look ...
But all I can think of is titles...
I see.
Huh?

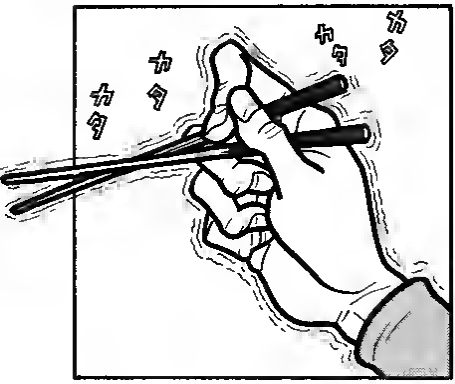
I can practically see the glint in his eyes...
Like, "Don't be slackin' off when I'm in the throes of mortal agony over here!"
But it feels like... Shoji's watching over me somehow.
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
ざ
So I thought, I'd better make up for lost time! Y'know?
.....
Mmmm

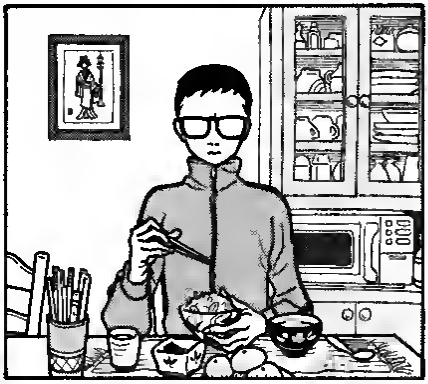
"Welcome Back"
Damn ...
I'm fuckin' hungry.
Wanna go get some ramen after this?
B...but Shoji's going to be furious...
So? Elm, you know any good places?
Well, at this time of night ...
You guyyys!
CHAPTER 10 END

MONKEY & GOGH

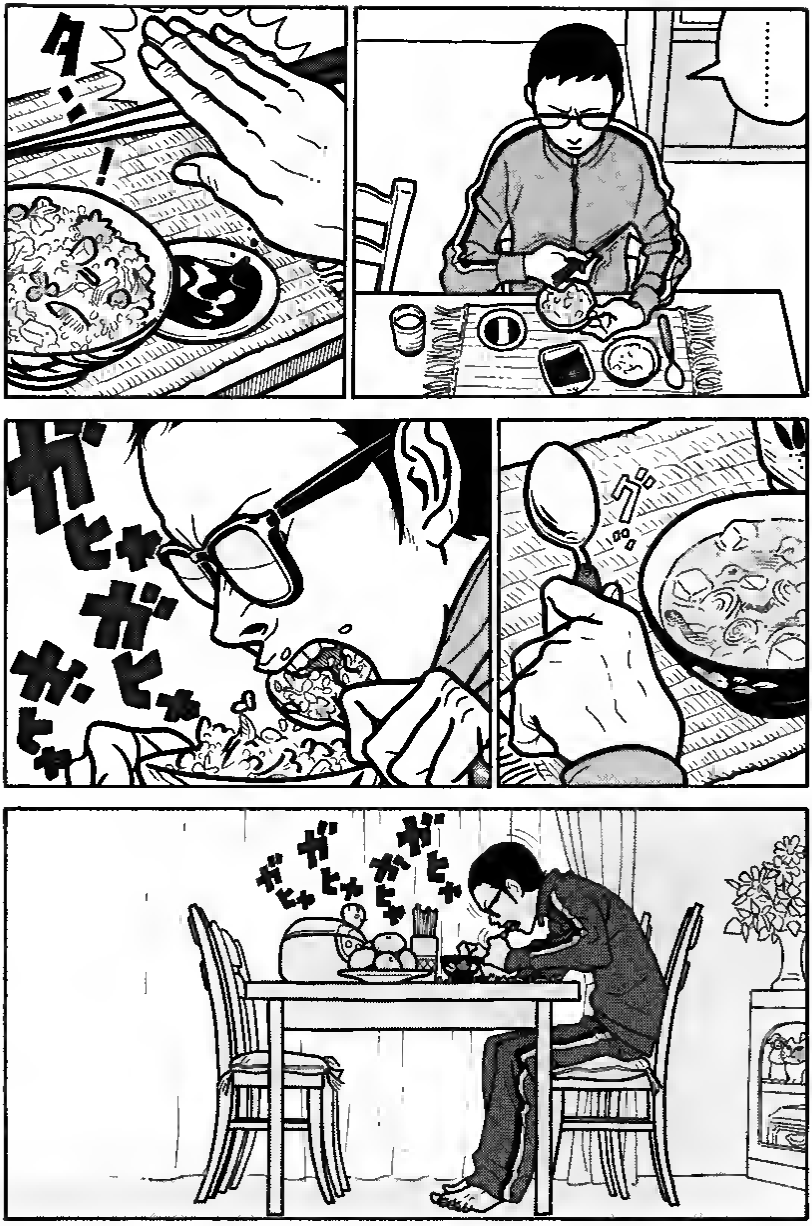
チュンチュン
チュン
チュン
チュンチュン
チュンチュン


Going to be out for a little while. I cooked the takikomi-rice already so heat it up in the microwave and eat.
-Mom-
P.S. I know you can walk now but just don't overdo it!

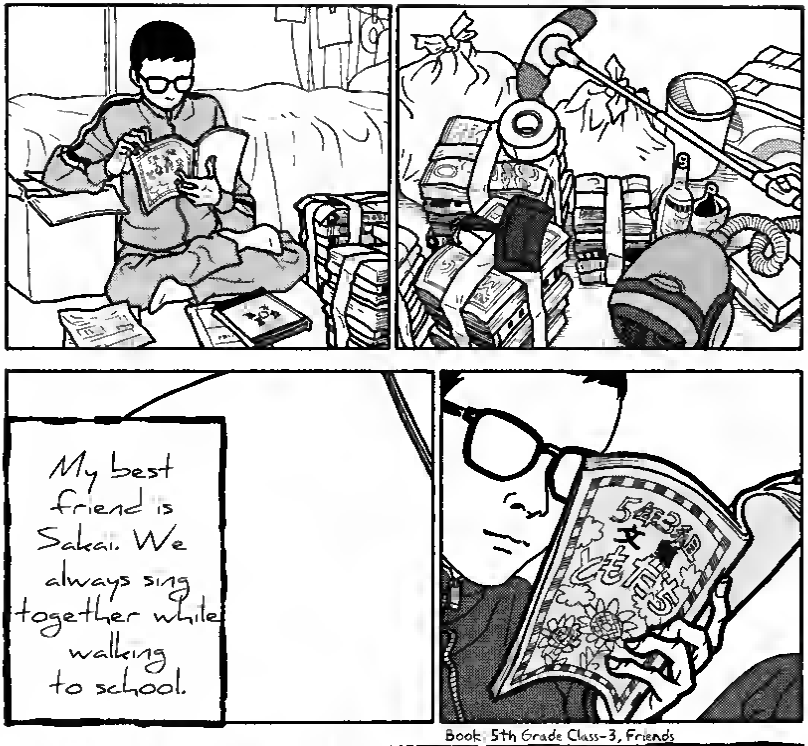

カタ
カタ
カタ
カタ

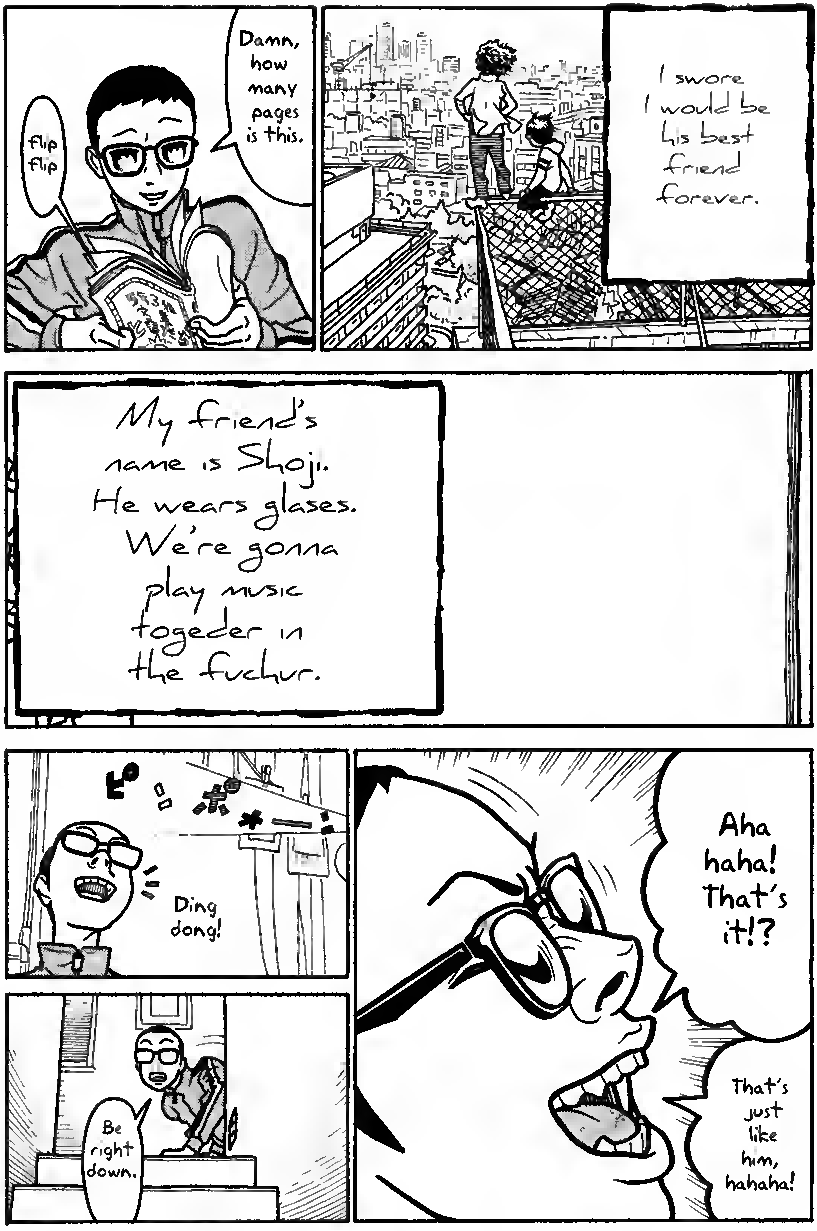


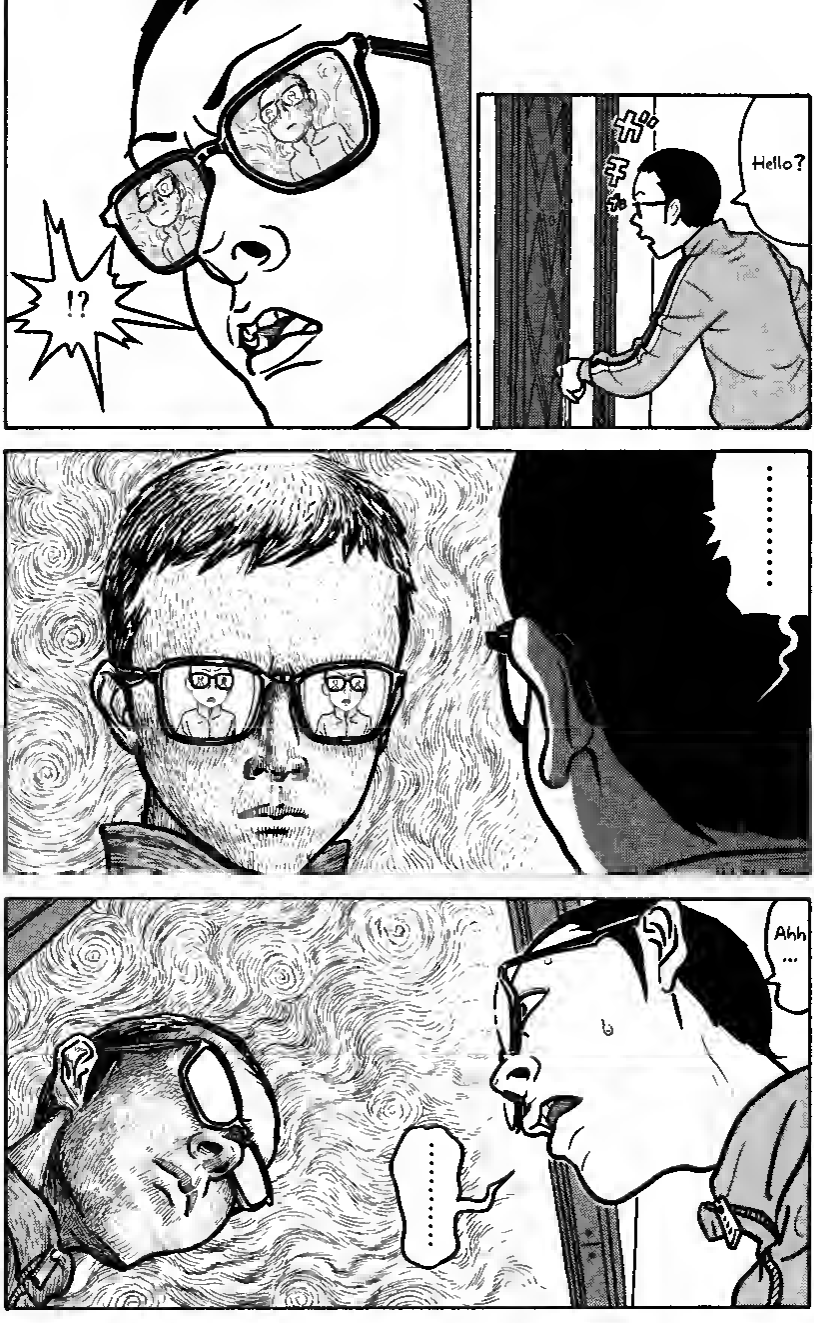
ホロ
ホロ
ホロ


タン！
……
ガヒャガヒャガヒャ
ガヒャガヒャガヒャガヒャ

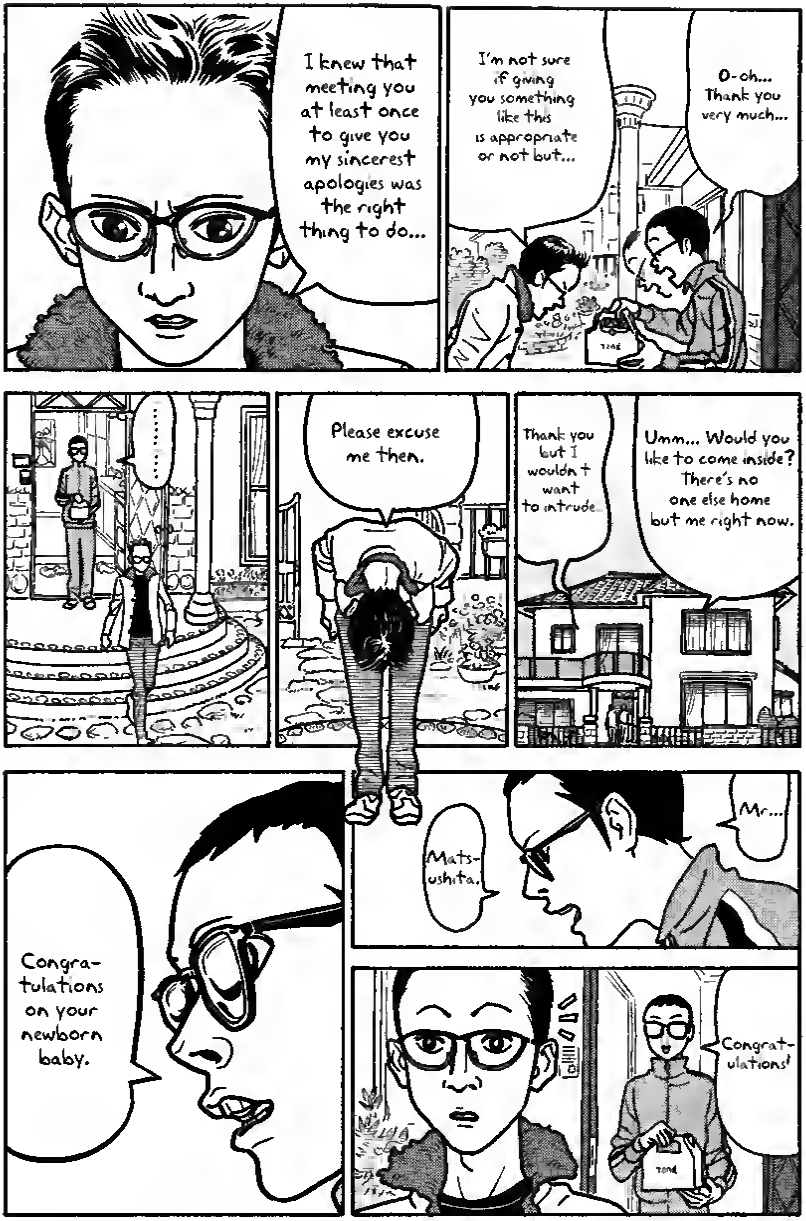
ガアアア
ガアアア


My best friend is Sakai. We always sing together while walking to school.
Book: 5th Grade Class-3, Friends
You don't find him a little weird?
Prince is good.
Everyone else seems to think Sakai is scary or an idiot, but I don't think that way
My mother also said Jin Sakai's a very kind child.
Sakai's really good at singing and can do go impressions like mimicking the Beatles. I think he's really talented

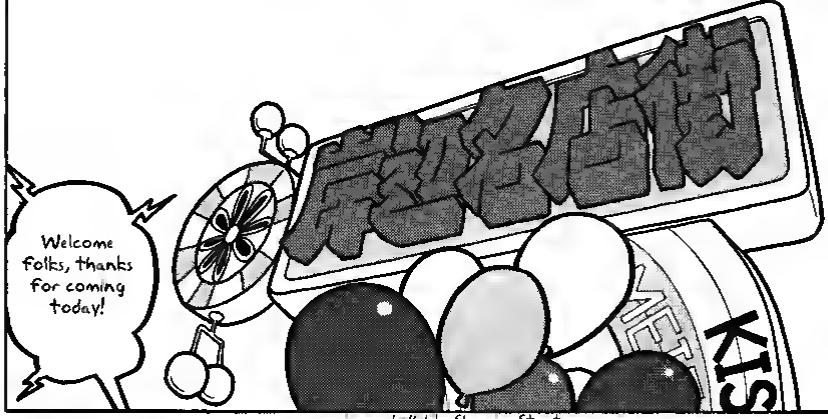

Damn, how many pages is this.
flip flip
I swore I would be his best friend forever.
My friend's name is Shoji. He wears glases. We're gonna play music togeder in the fuchur.
Ding dong!
Be right down.
Aha haha! That's it!?
That's just like him, hahaha!


!?
ピンポーン
Hello?
.....
Ahh...
.....

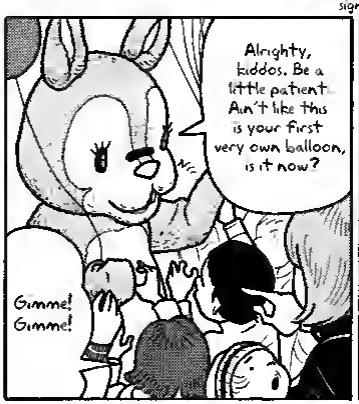
Matsushita, the guy who hit you while on a motorcycle.
I'm...
h-hi...
Uhh...
Hello...
Umm...
I'm truly sorry!
N-no, it's fine...
Ohh!
Ah!
I feel horrible for causing you so much trouble and yet you still decided to settle this whole affair outside of court...
It was really my fault to begin with... I mean, it's only obvious you'd get run over if you don't even look ahead of you while crossing the streets...
I know this may not be much but...
Please accept this cake I made at where I work.
TOO

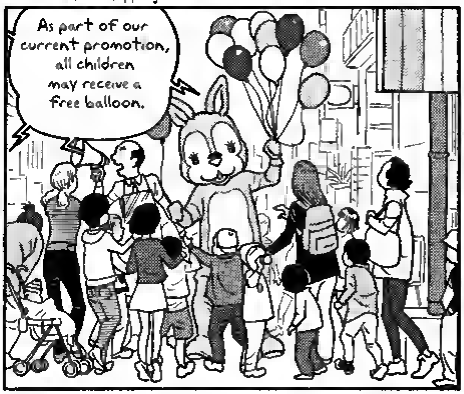

I knew that meeting you at least once to give you my sincerest apologies was the right thing to do...
I'm not sure if giving you something like this is appropriate or not but...
O-oh... Thank you very much...
Please excuse me then.
Thank you but I wouldn't want to intrude.
Umm... Would you like to come inside? There's no one else home but me right now.
Congratulations on your newborn baby.
Mats-ushita.
Mr...
Congrat-ulations!

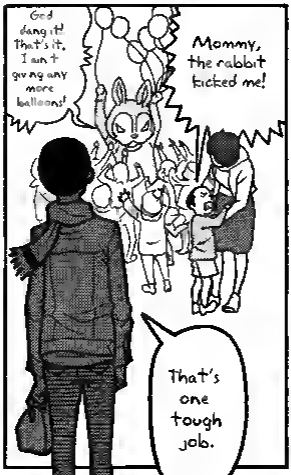
My wife had just started her labour pains that night,
So I ended up panicking and tried to rush back...
I heard it from your insurance agent...
Oh... So you knew...
But that's still no excuse for my reckless driving that night.
.....
Excuse me, then.
Yes.
So things ended up turning alright on his end, did they...
TONÉ

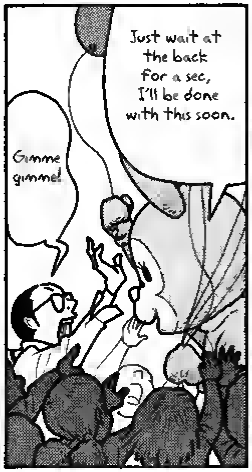


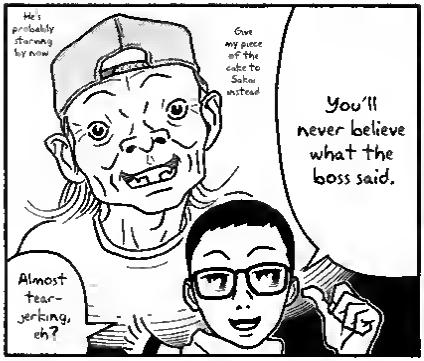
sign reads: Kishibe Shopping Street

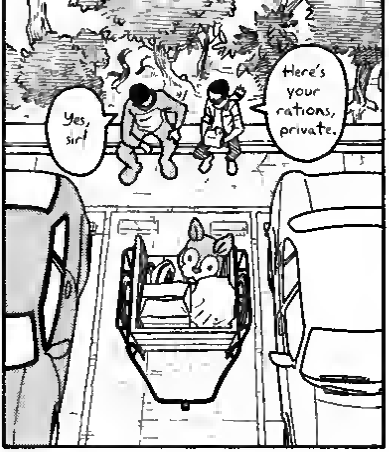









He's probably starving by now
Give my piece of the cake to Sakai instead
You'll never believe what the boss said.
Almost tear-jerking, eh?

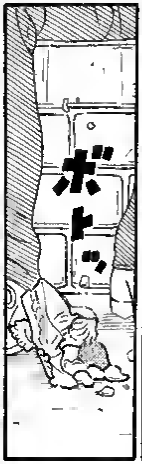

Here's your rations, private.
Yes, sir!

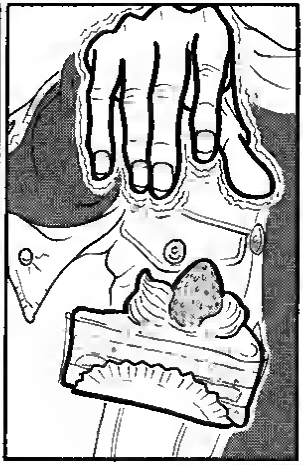
カタカタカタ
Ah-
TONÉ

Sure.
I'm only gonna eat this piece so you can have the rest.

Ha, yeah right! That's probably more his doctor talking, since he shouldn't be eating sweets at his age.

……
カ?
カタ
カタ


ボトッ

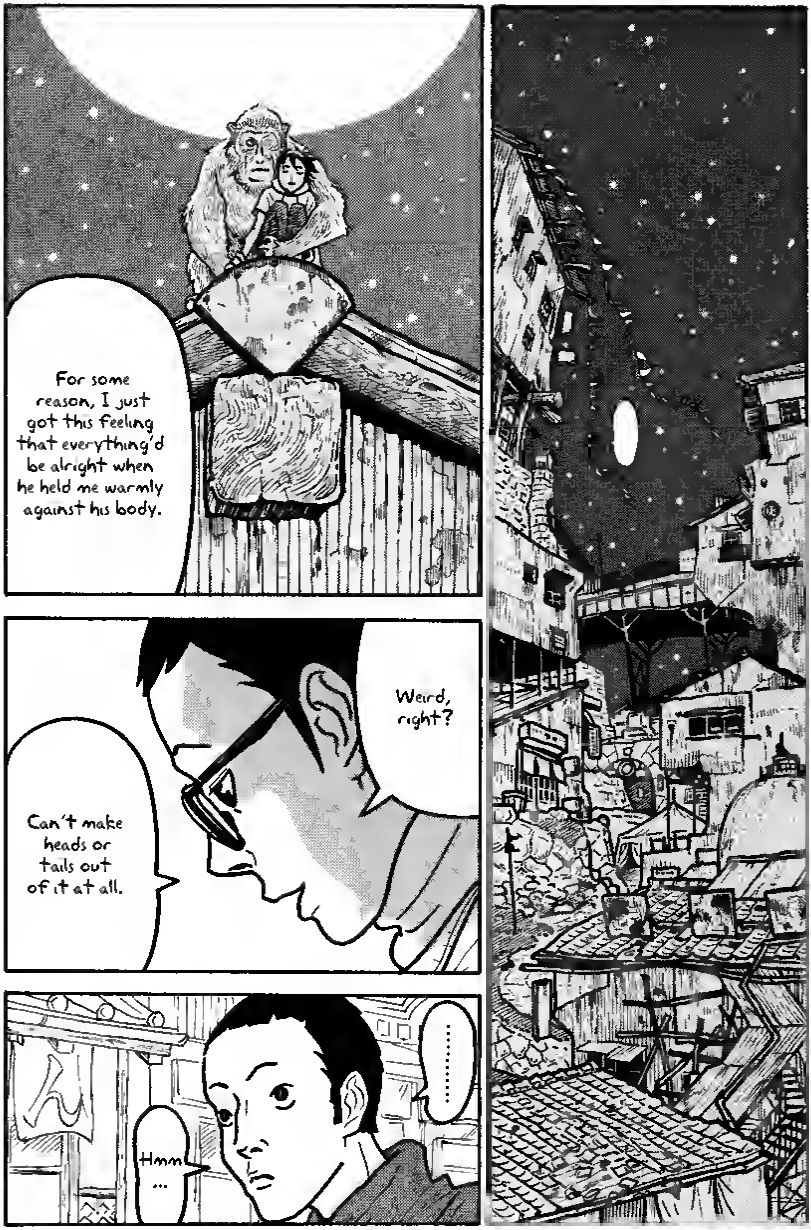


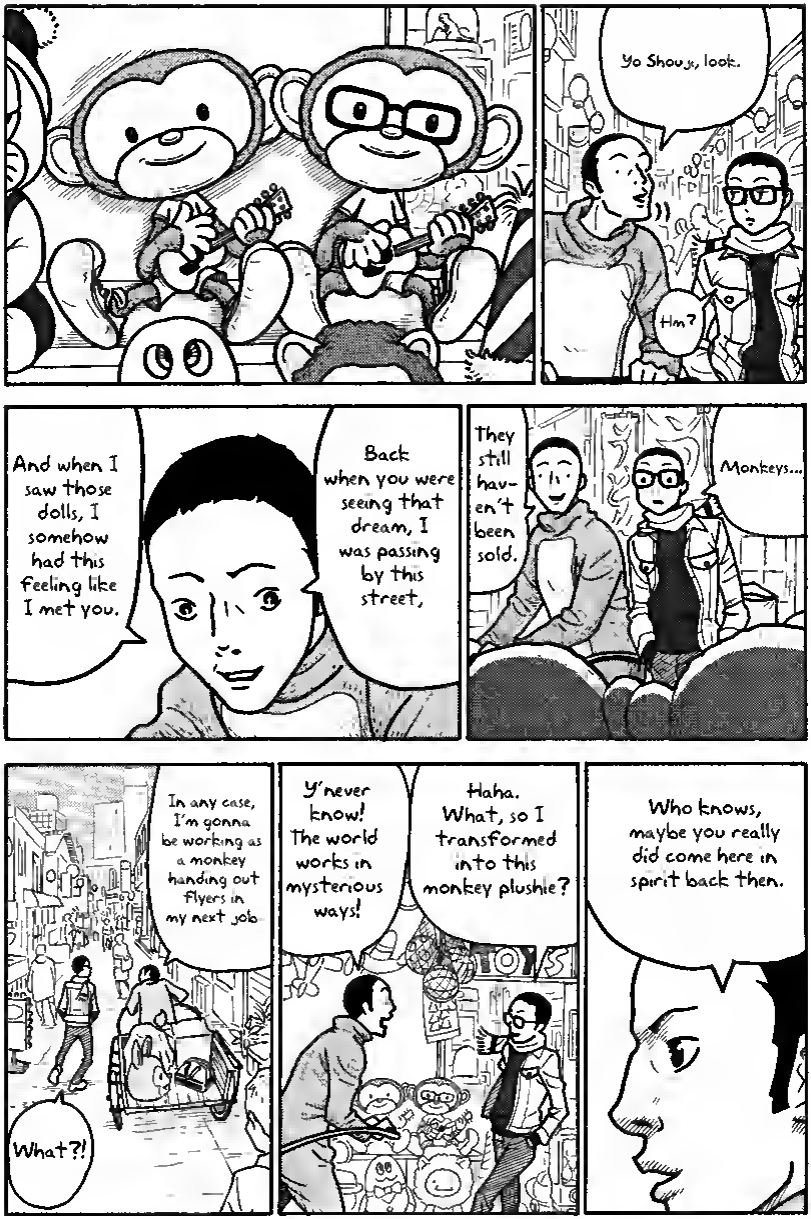
No man, the cake's still good.
You don't need to do that for me.
It's fine! 5 second rule! 5 second rule!
Ah!
.....
Hand me another piece.
Hey,
But these after-symptoms are a pain in the ass...
.....
Nah, too embarr-assing
You want a ride?

30周年ありがとうキャンペーン
Hm?
It was here, wasn't it...
Now that I think about it...
Banner reads: Thank you for 30 years of your patronage
In my dream, I think we'd been jumped by Takada and his crew, just like the time back in high school...
I had this weird dream after the accident...
But the place looked all different for some reason...
I really thought you'd been knocked out too beside me in my dream.
I think that's why I was calling out your name while sleeping.
But instead of the place where that happened, I found myself lying down on the streets here...

Sakai...
It freakin' hurts...
Arghh!
!!
W-what the fuck!?
The hell!? S-stop!

Hi..
Help ..
Whimper
Whimper


For some reason, I just got this feeling that everything'd be alright when he held me warmly against his body.
Weird, right?
Can't make heads or tails out of it at all.
.....
Hmm ...


Yo Shouya, look.
Hm?
Monkeys...
They still haven't been sold.
Back when you were seeing that dream, I was passing by this street,
And when I saw those dolls, I somehow had this feeling like I met you.
Who knows, maybe you really did come here in spirit back then.
Haha. What, so I transformed into this monkey plushie?
Y'never know! The world works in mysterious ways!
In any case, I'm gonna be working as a monkey handing out flyers in my next job
What?!

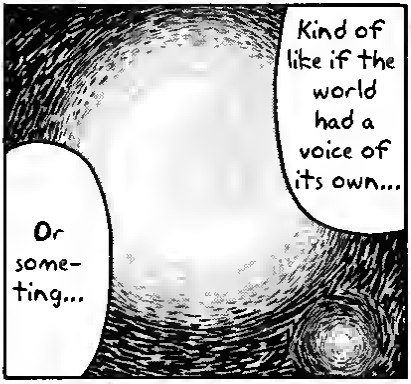
sign reads: 3000 Worlds Pachinko

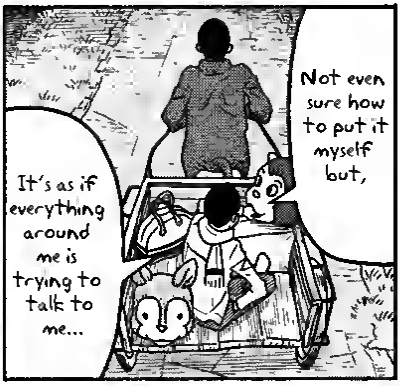
Care for a flyer, sir?
三千世界
Come right in, folks!
You don't have to help
We've got all the latest machines!
Would you be interested in our flyer?
No, it's fine.
Come right in, sirs!
Thank you, sir!

Hey, Sakai...
Hm?
I'm not just talking about jittery hands. You think I've changed in any way as a person since the accident?
BIRD OF PARADISE
NELMAN
You think... I've changed a bit from before...?
I just feel so much more different from how I used to be back in the good ol' days when we just messed around...
.....

When I'm out here to resume my life again...
Everything just seems so new it's almost scary...

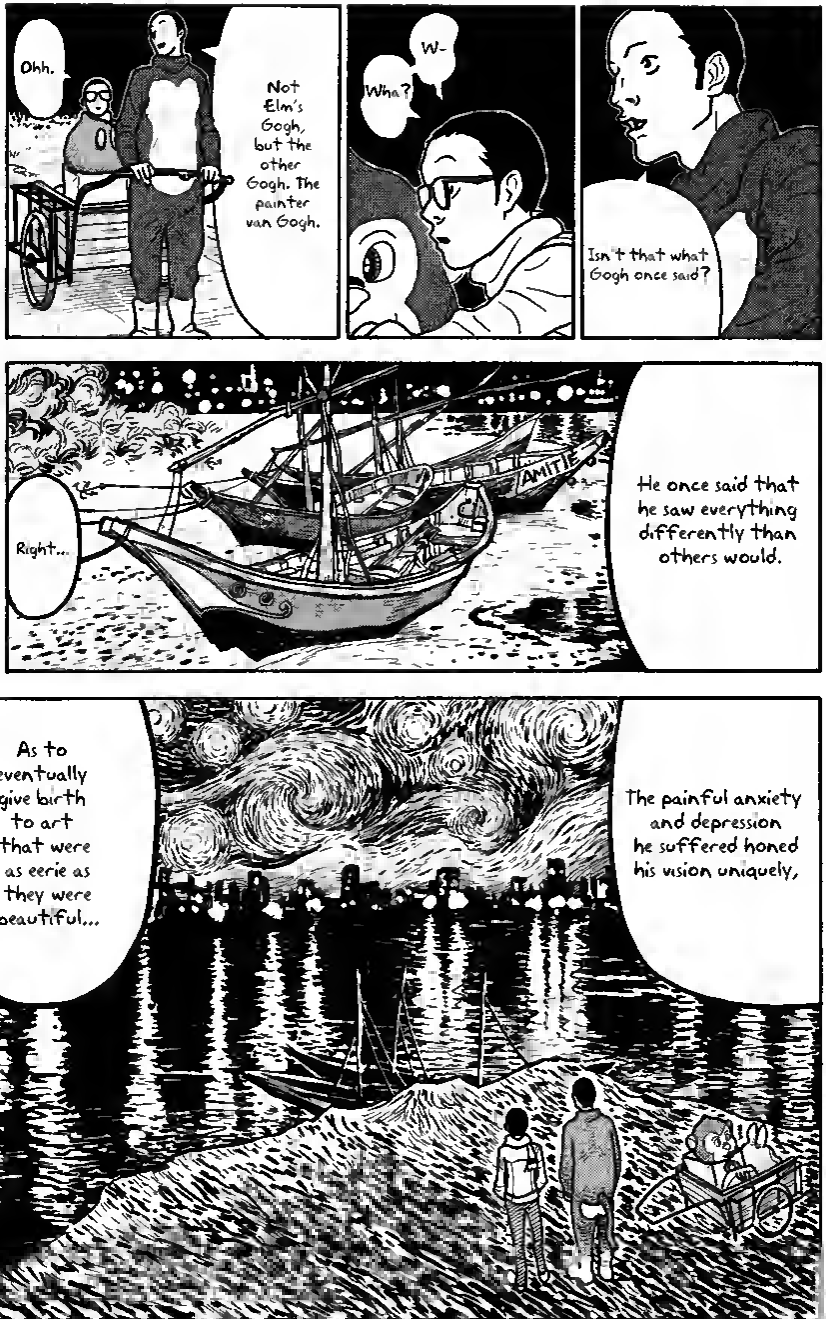
PIZZA DOMICILE

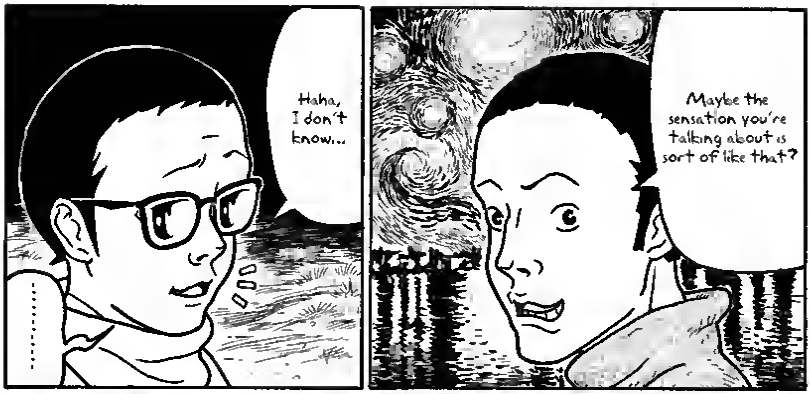

Kind of like if the world had a voice of its own...
Or some-ting...


Not even sure how to put it myself but,
It's as if everything around me is trying to talk to me...

Not even sure if I can continue to play for Moozmuz with me like this.

Because of that, I just feel so awkward and strange... Like I'm still stuck in a dream...
It's really making me anxious...

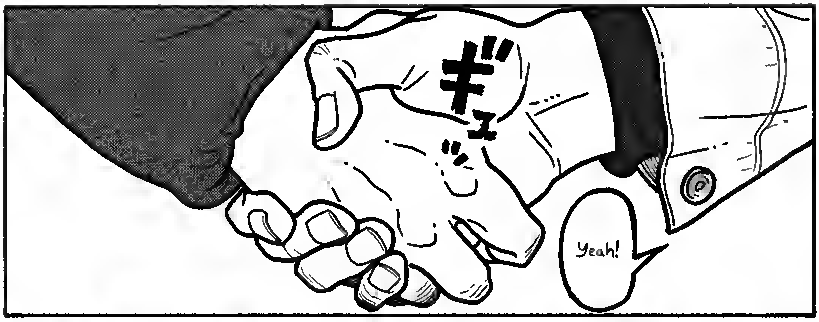

Ohh.
Not Elm's Gogh, but the other Gogh. The painter van Gogh.
W-
Wha?
Isn't that what Gogh once said?
AMITIE
Right...
He once said that he saw everything differently than others would.
The painful anxiety and depression he suffered honed his vision uniquely,
As to eventually give birth to art that were as eerie as they were beautiful...


Haha, I don't know...
Maybe the sensation you're talking about is sort of like that?

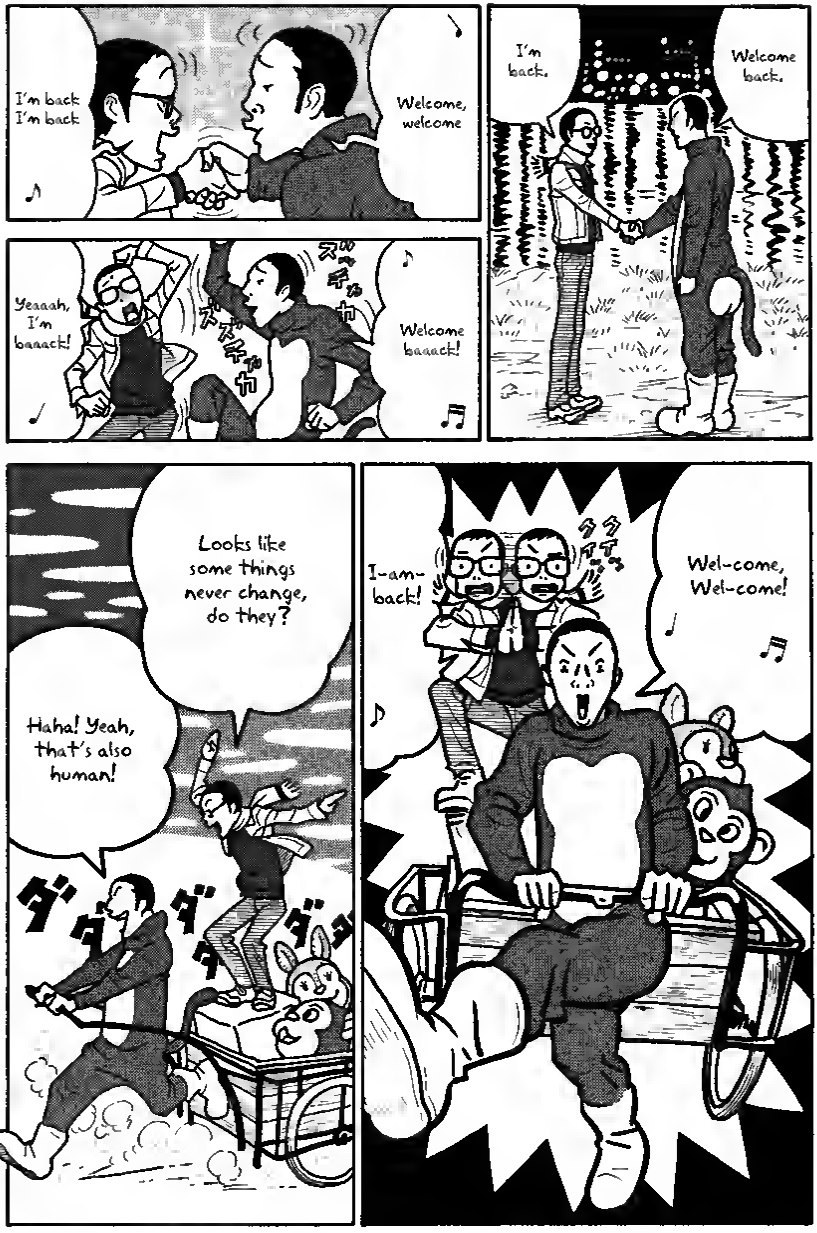
Don't worry, Shouji!
To change is to be human!

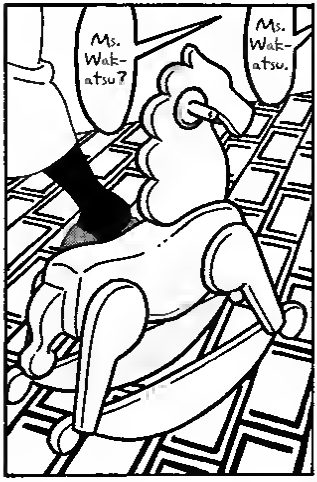
y..yeah...
So no need to panic! We still got a long ways to go so let's give it our best!
Ah...
Right...
No matter how much you change or don't change, I'll always be right by your side!
I'm by your side right now, aren't I?!
It'll be fine!
We're gonna play music togeder in the fuchur.
Ha...

Welcome back.


ギュ
Yeah!

I'm back.

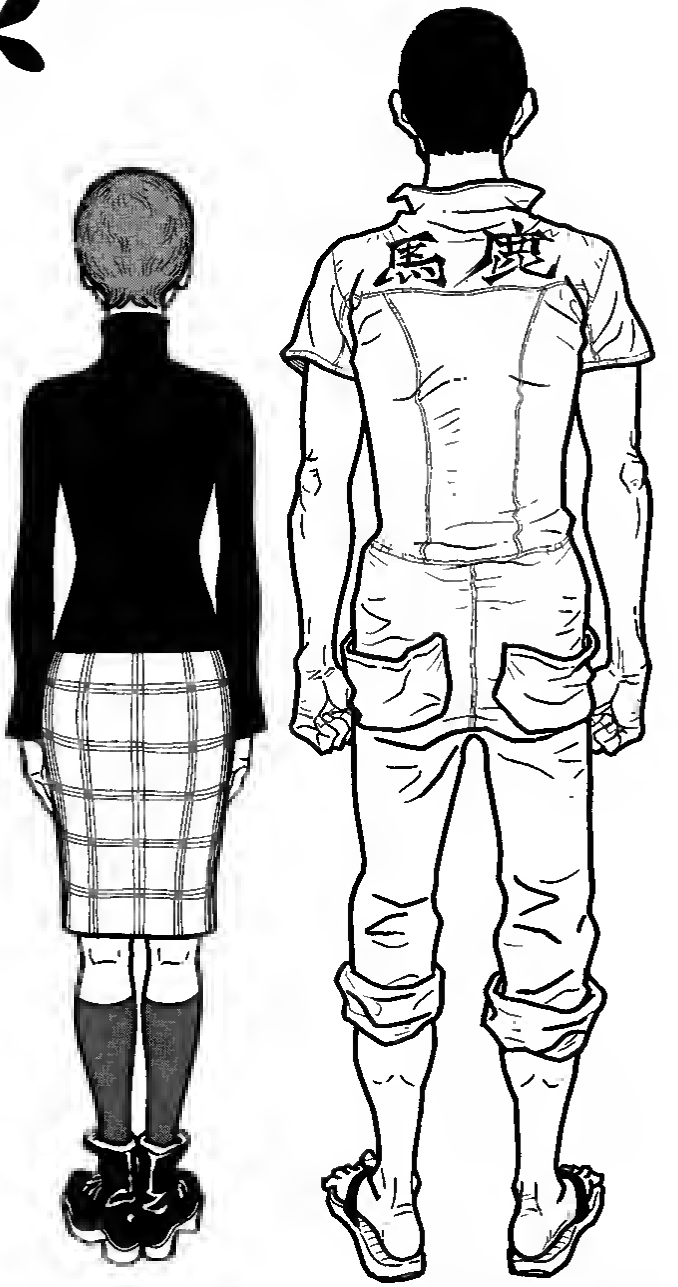

I'm back I'm back
Welcome, welcome
Yeaaah, I'm baaack!
Welcome baaack!
I'm back.
Welcome back.
Looks like some things never change, do they?
Haha! Yeah, that's also human!
I-am-back!
Wel-come, Wel-come!


Ms. Wak-atsu?
Ms. Wak-atsu.

sign reads: OB/GYN Clinic

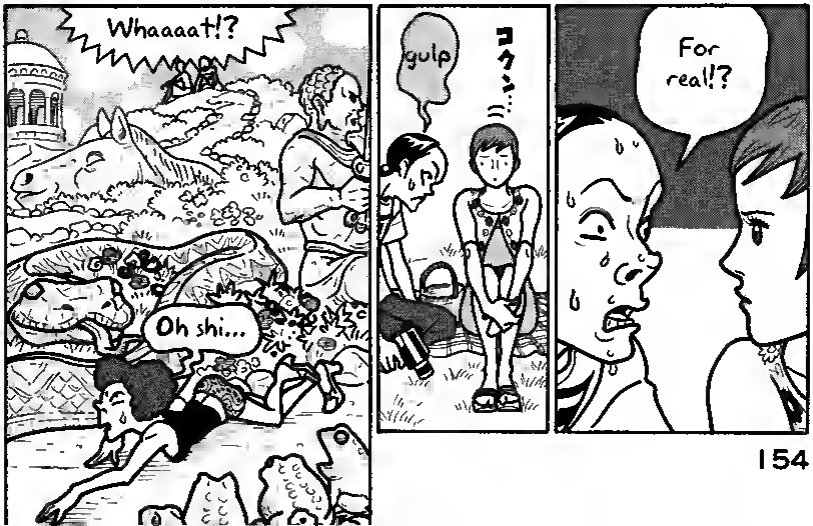
It'd be first, "Play!"
But if they did say anything,
"Play!" Is that right!?

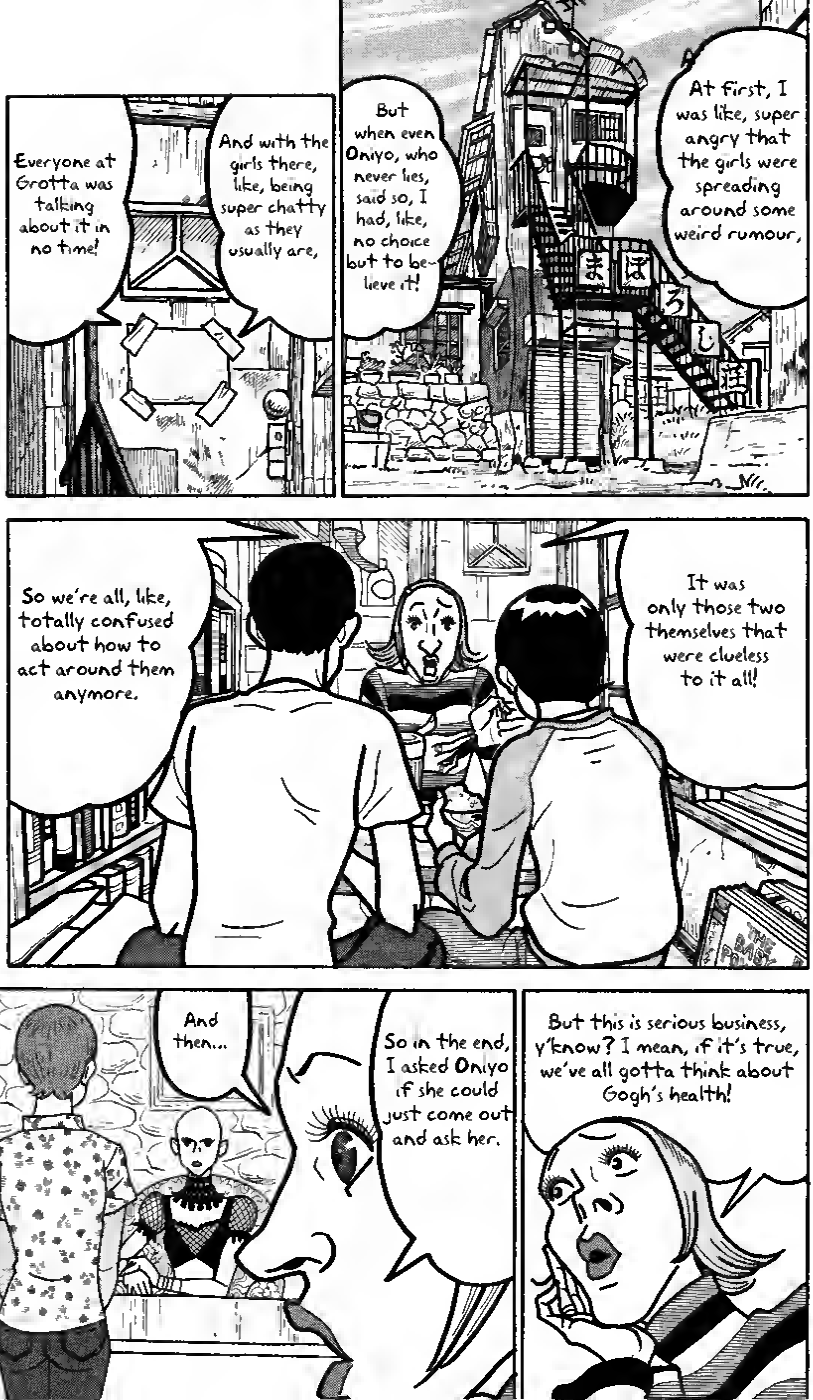
FINAL CHAPTER
"THE IDIOTS AND THE WOMAN"

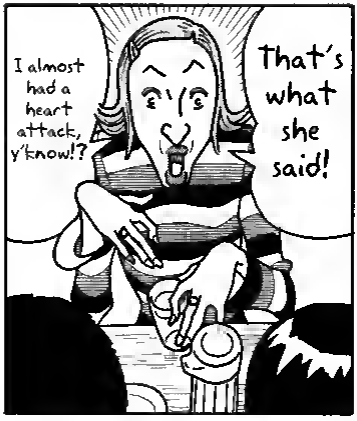


Can you...
Stop the camera for a sec?
Hm?
Hey, Elm...
I...
Ah.
Uhh,
Sure.
I'm...I'm pregnant...

Haha... T-there you go again,
With another one of your jokes.
Wha?!
Huh?
Aha...
.....


Whaaaat!?
Oh shi...
gulp
コクッ…
For real!?


At first, I was like, super angry that the girls were spreading around some weird rumour,
But when even Oniyo, who never lies, said so, I had, like, no choice but to believe it!
And with the girls there, like, being super chatty as they usually are,
Everyone at Grotta was talking about it in no time!
It was only those two themselves that were clueless to it all!
So we're all, like, totally confused about how to act around them anymore.
But this is serious business, y'know? I mean, if it's true, we've all gotta think about Gogh's health!
So in the end, I asked Oniyo if she could just come out and ask her.
And then...

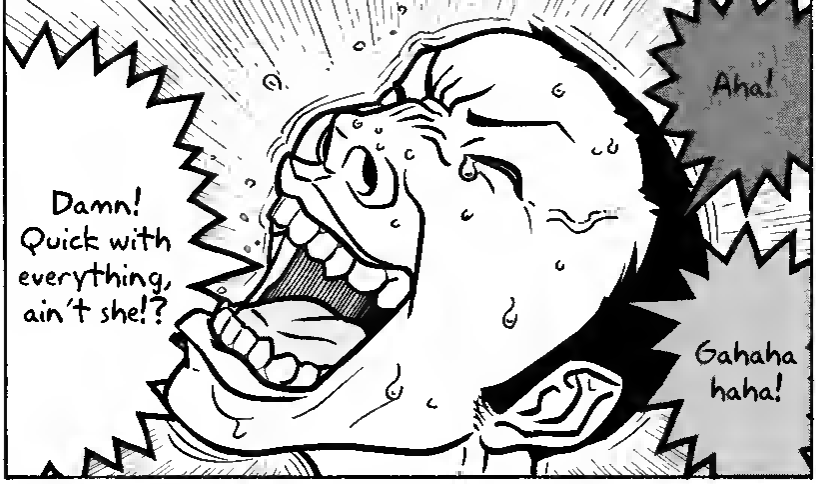

I almost had a heart attack, y'know!?
That's what she said!

It's already been almost 3 months...

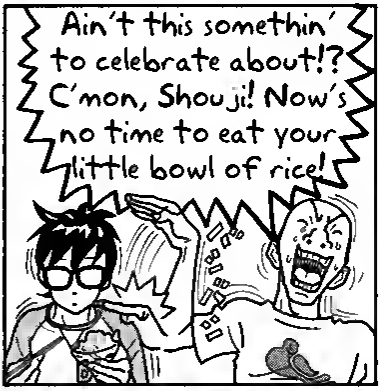
.....

.....
Are you kidding me...

Gogh... pregnant...


Damn! Quick with everything, ain't she!?
Aha!
Gahaha haha!

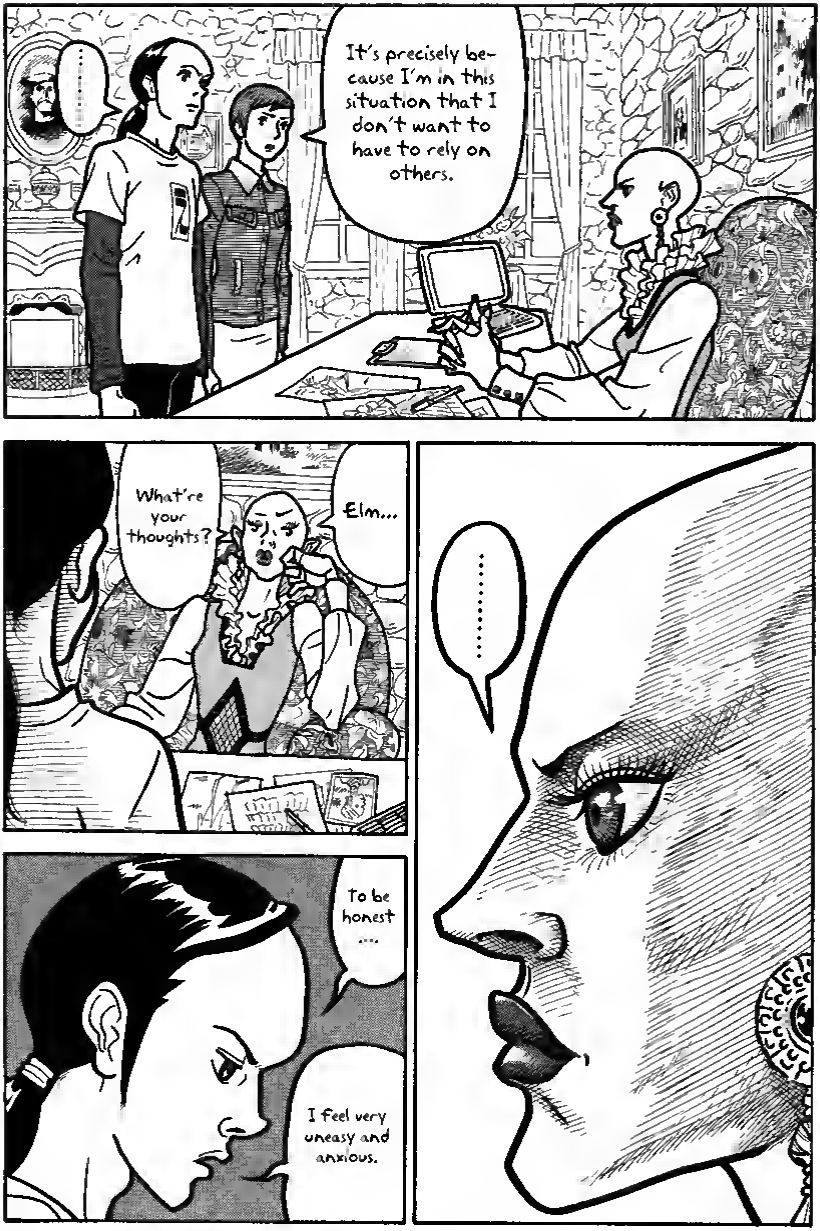
We've gotta get off our asses and write her a song to cogratulate her!

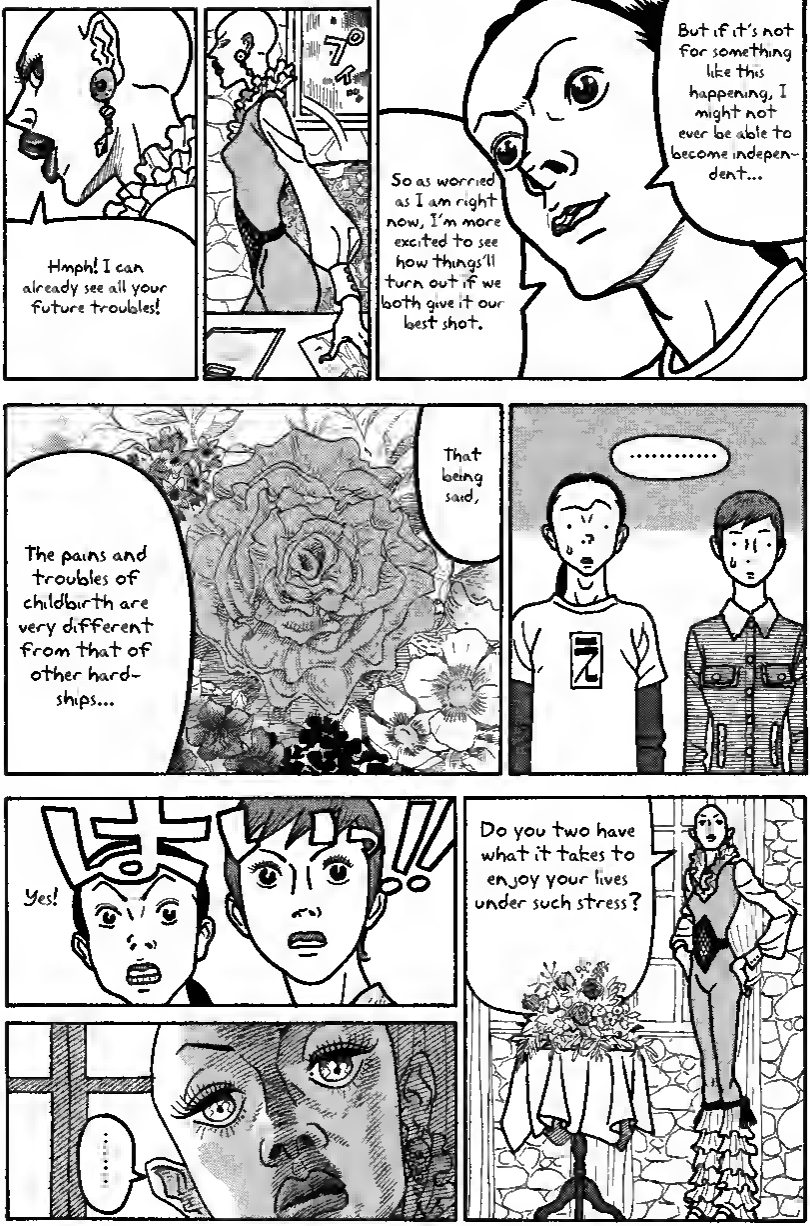

Ain't this somethin' to celebrate about!? C'mon, Shouji! Now's no time to eat your little bowl of rice!

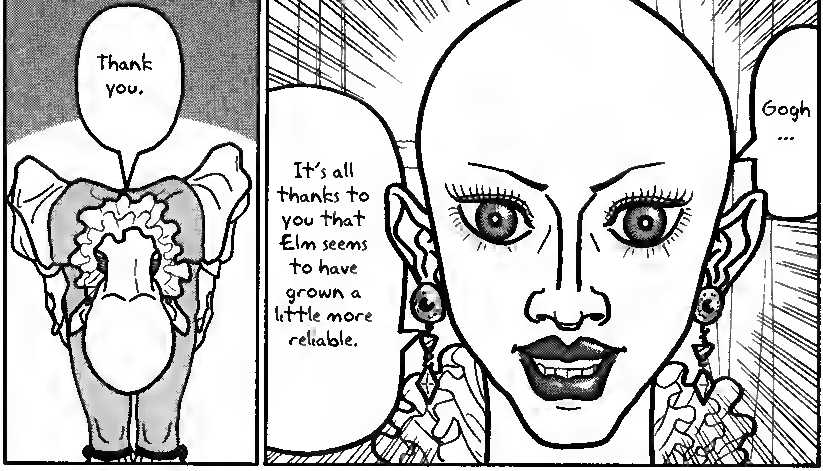
A mother ....
Gogh's ....

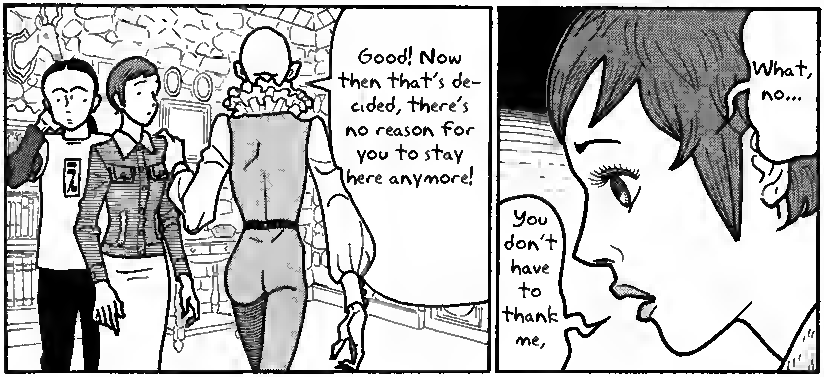
Alright, you go, girl!
Maybe I shouldn't have told you...

ギヒヒ
ギヒヒヒ


It's precisely because I'm in this situation that I don't want to have to rely on others.
Elm...
What're your thoughts?
To be honest ...
I feel very uneasy and anxious.

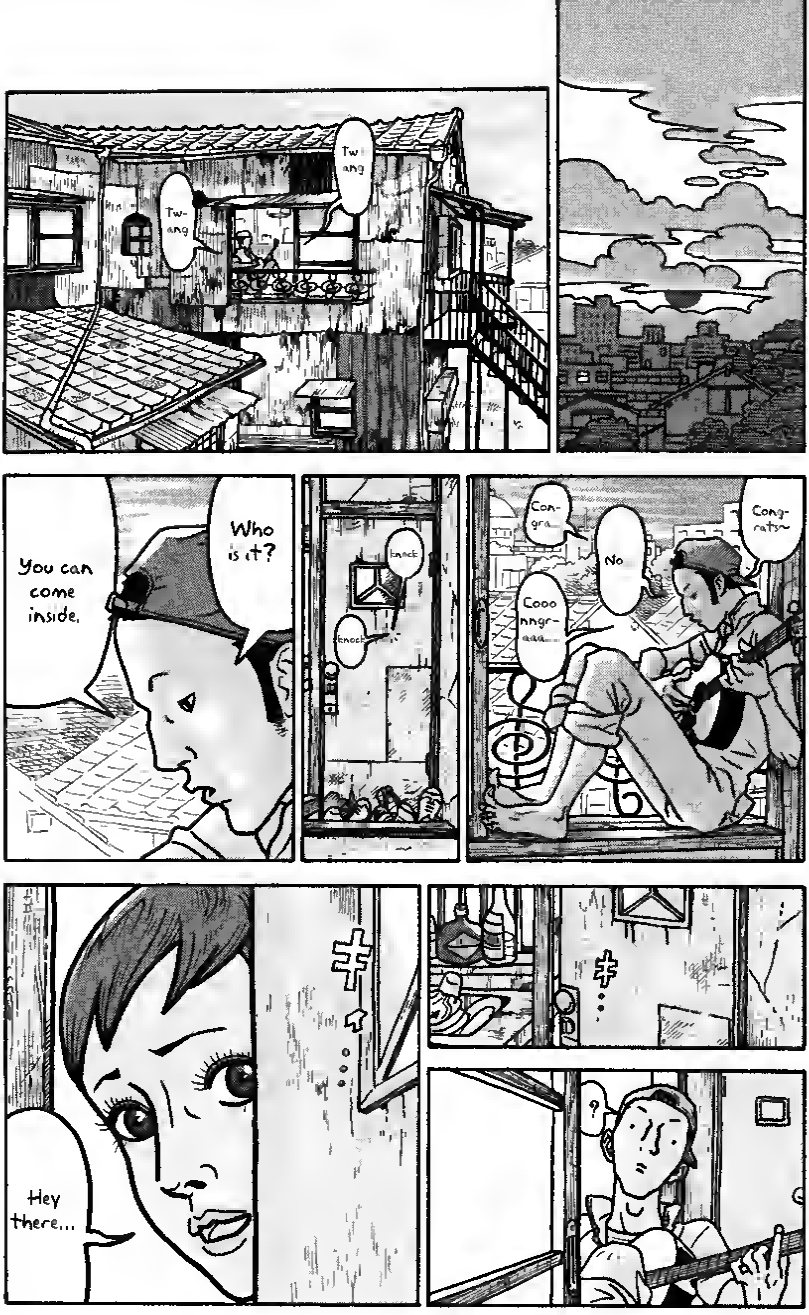

Hmph! I can already see all your future troubles!
So as worried as I am right now, I'm more excited to see how things'll turn out if we both give it our best shot.
But if it's not for something like this happening, I might not ever be able to become independent...
That being said,
The pains and troubles of childbirth are very different from that of other hardships...
.....
Do you two have what it takes to enjoy your lives under such stress?
Yes!
.....


Thank you.
It's all thanks to you that Elm seems to have grown a little more reliable.
Gogh ...

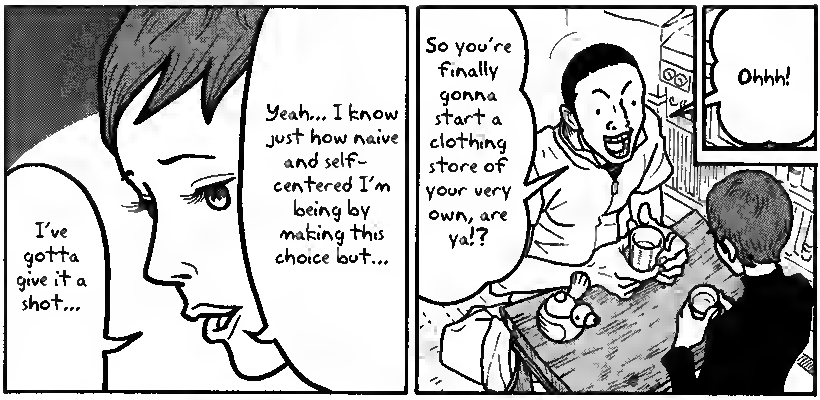

Good! Now then that's decided, there's no reason for you to stay here anymore!
What, no...
You don't have to thank me,

Seeing you two makes me want to go through those hardships all over again! Hahaha!
Pack your bags and leave!

Come and take a look!
Delicious baked goods at a low, low price!
OPEN!
Today's our grand opening!
Come on in, folks!
Backers BAKERY
Hey, Shouji... You know that...
Gogh's only done it once...
Backers
Hey! Be more serious, you two!
WOOO!
Grow up, dude.
Goddamn, Elm, that lucky son of a bitch!
OPEN!
Whatever, the real issue isn't about how many tries it took.
But that single time was all it took...

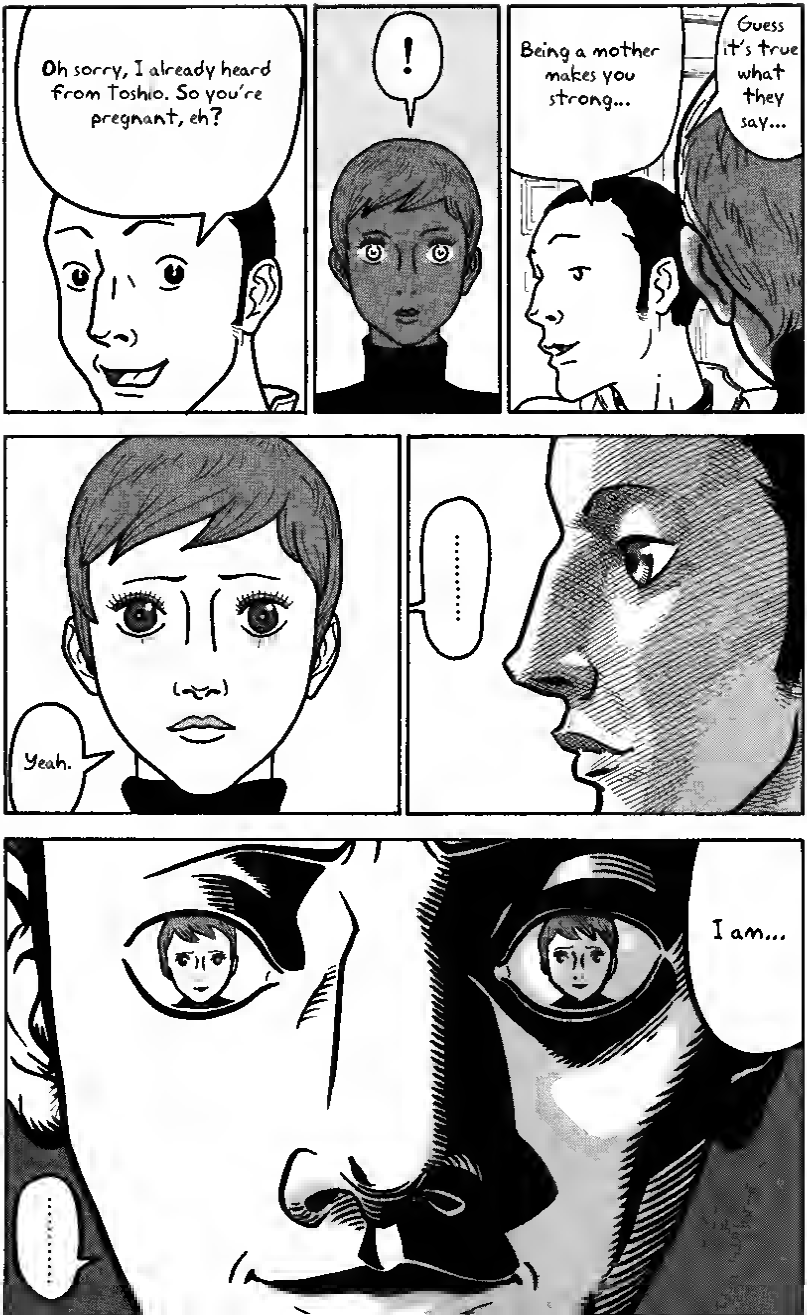

Twang
Twang
Who is it?
You can come inside.
tenock
tenock
Congra-
No
Cooo nngr-aaa...
Congratu~
Hey there...
?

ドス
GOGH!
Where's Shouji?
He went to the doctors for a checkup but he'll probably be back soon.
Sure
You came at a great time! Come in, come in!
Haha, yeah this place can be hard to find!
It was a little hard trying to find my way here, what with the scribbles that Toshio calls a map.
But I'm reeeeal glad,
That you came!


I've gotta give it a shot...
Yeah... I know just how naive and self-centered I'm being by making this choice but...
So you're finally gonna start a clothing store of your very own, are ya!?
Ohhh!

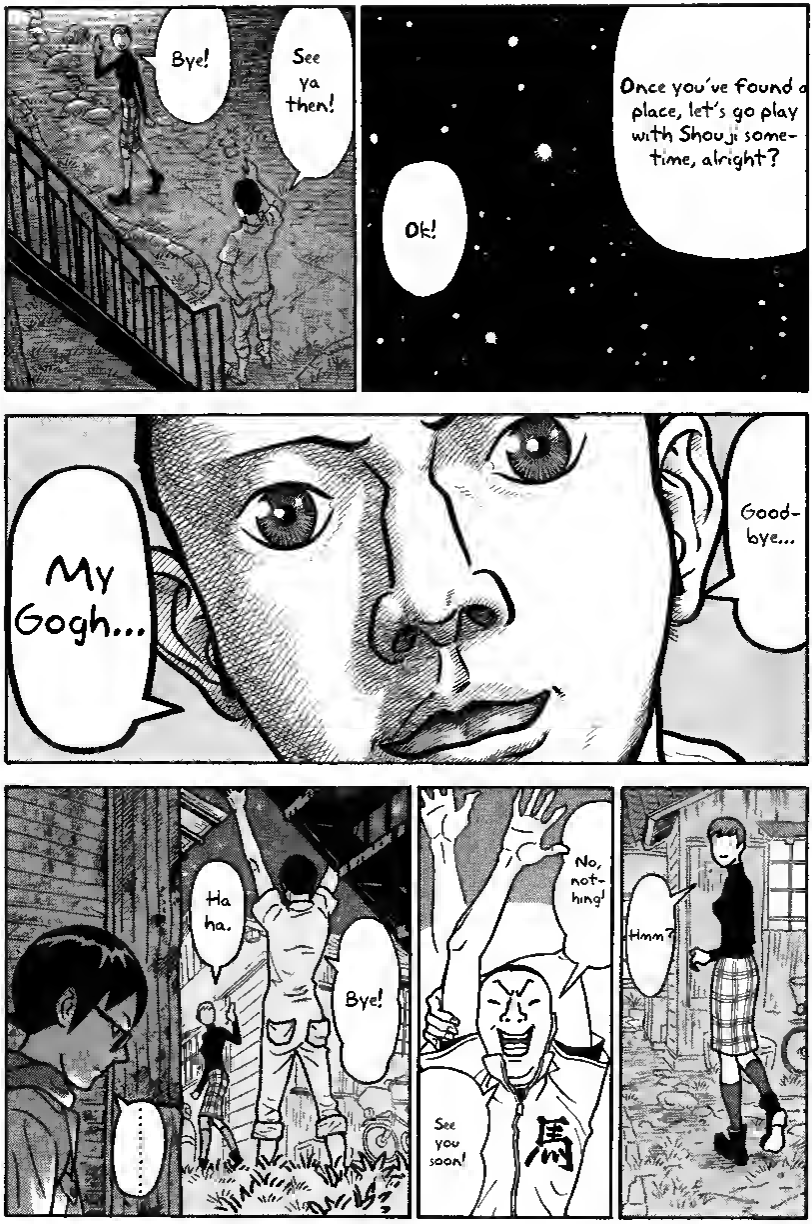
Thanks.
Just tell me if there's anything I can help you out with!
THE BABY POWDER
So don't feel guilty about it!
All artists need to be self-centered if they want to create something of their own!

I really appreciate it...
Thanks a lot...
So I guess we'll be ordering our costumes from your place!
Oh, that's right, Moozmuz is gonna start up again too!
Sakai ...
Sure thing!


Oh sorry, I already heard from Toshio. So you're pregnant, eh?
!
Being a mother makes you strong...
Guess it's true what they say...
(-_-)
Yeah.
.....
I am...
.....

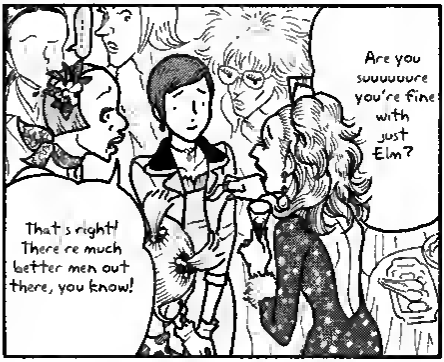
……
Whaa …
Oh c'mon! When's the next time I can listen to the enchanting sound only women have!
Hey!
Can you let me listen to your stomach? Pretty please?
Wha?!
Pardon me then, ma'am!
I don't think there'll be anything to hear though…
You can't hear anything, right?
……

No... I can definitely hear it!
It's the sound of the whole universe!

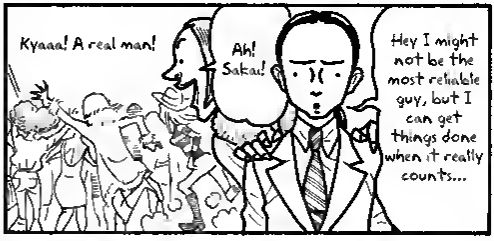

Bye!
See ya then!
Once you've found a place, let's go play with Shouji sometime, alright?
Ok!
My Gogh...
Good-bye...
Ha ha.
Bye!
.....
No, nothing!
See you soon!
Hmm?

You know Gogh just came by.
Oh, Shouji.
Hm?
I guess I should say it too.
Aghh! You heard me!?
Good-bye to my Gogh as well!
I said shut up!
Try to think about who you are before you talk, 'kay?
Shut up!
Big words from some-one so conceited!
You little peepin' tom!

I...I'm not gonna argue back...
Just look what they're all saying about you! Are you gonna do anything?
Ugh! so pathetic!

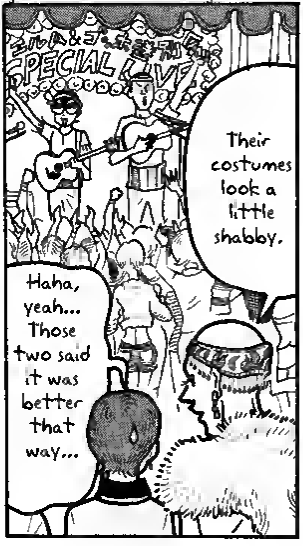

Are you suuuuuure you're fine with just Elm?
That's right! There're much better men out there, you know!

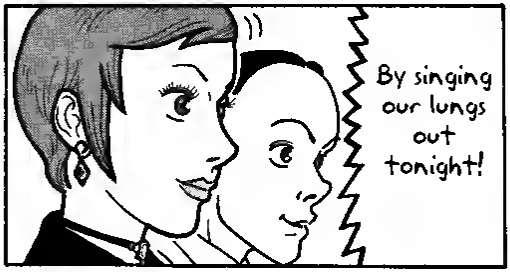
I heard that just now! You better keep your word!
Kyaaa! You're so cute, glasses-boy!
I...I will...

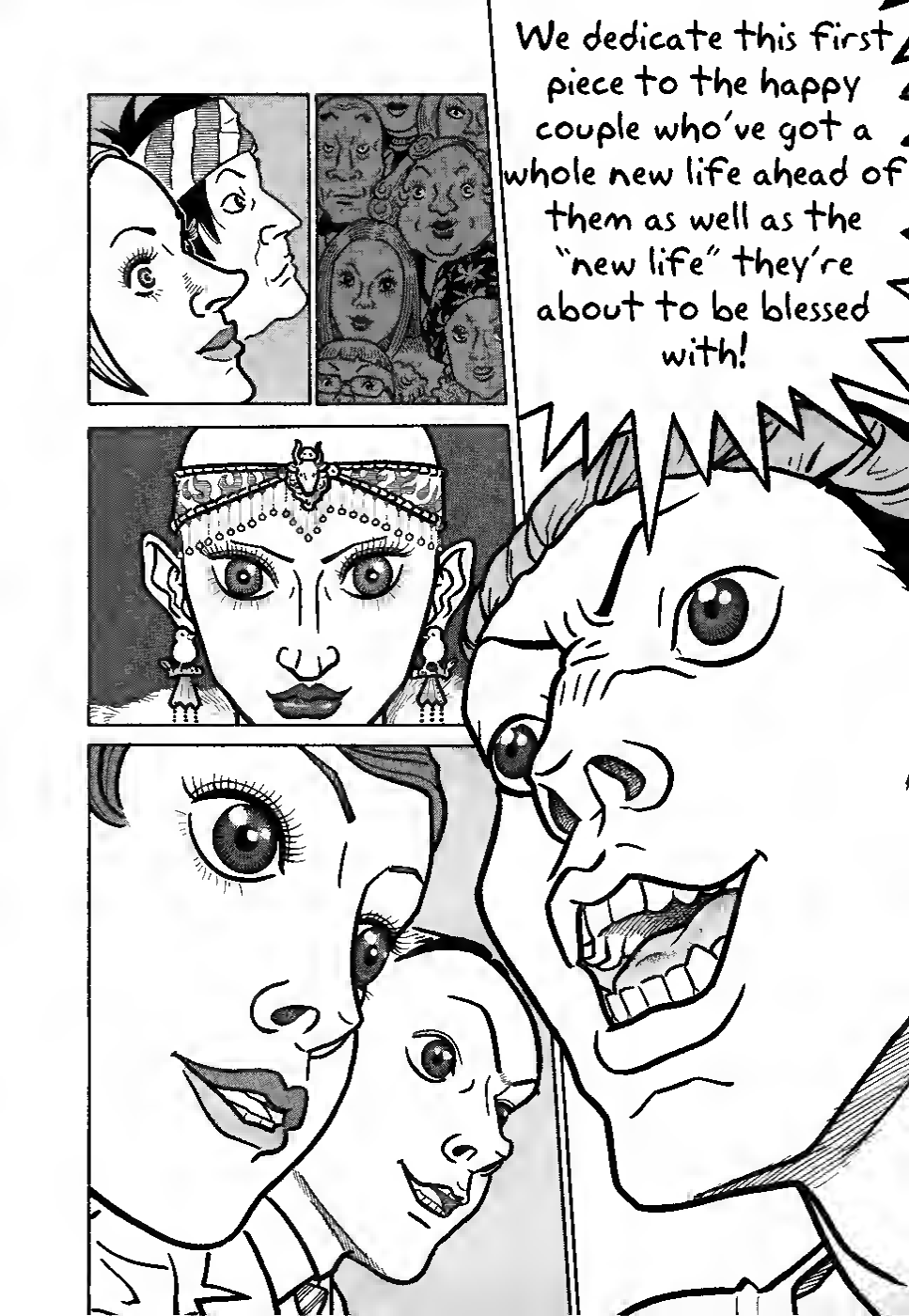

Kyaaa! A real man!
Ah! Sakai!
Hey I might not be the most reliable guy, but I can get things done when it really counts...

Damn it These girls think they can just say that in front of me and get away with it
Don't worry! Don't worry!

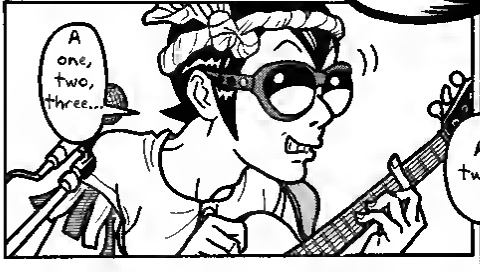
sign reads: Elm and Gogh's Farewell Party






We dedicate this first piece to the happy couple who've got a whole new life ahead of them as well as the "new life" they're about to be blessed with!

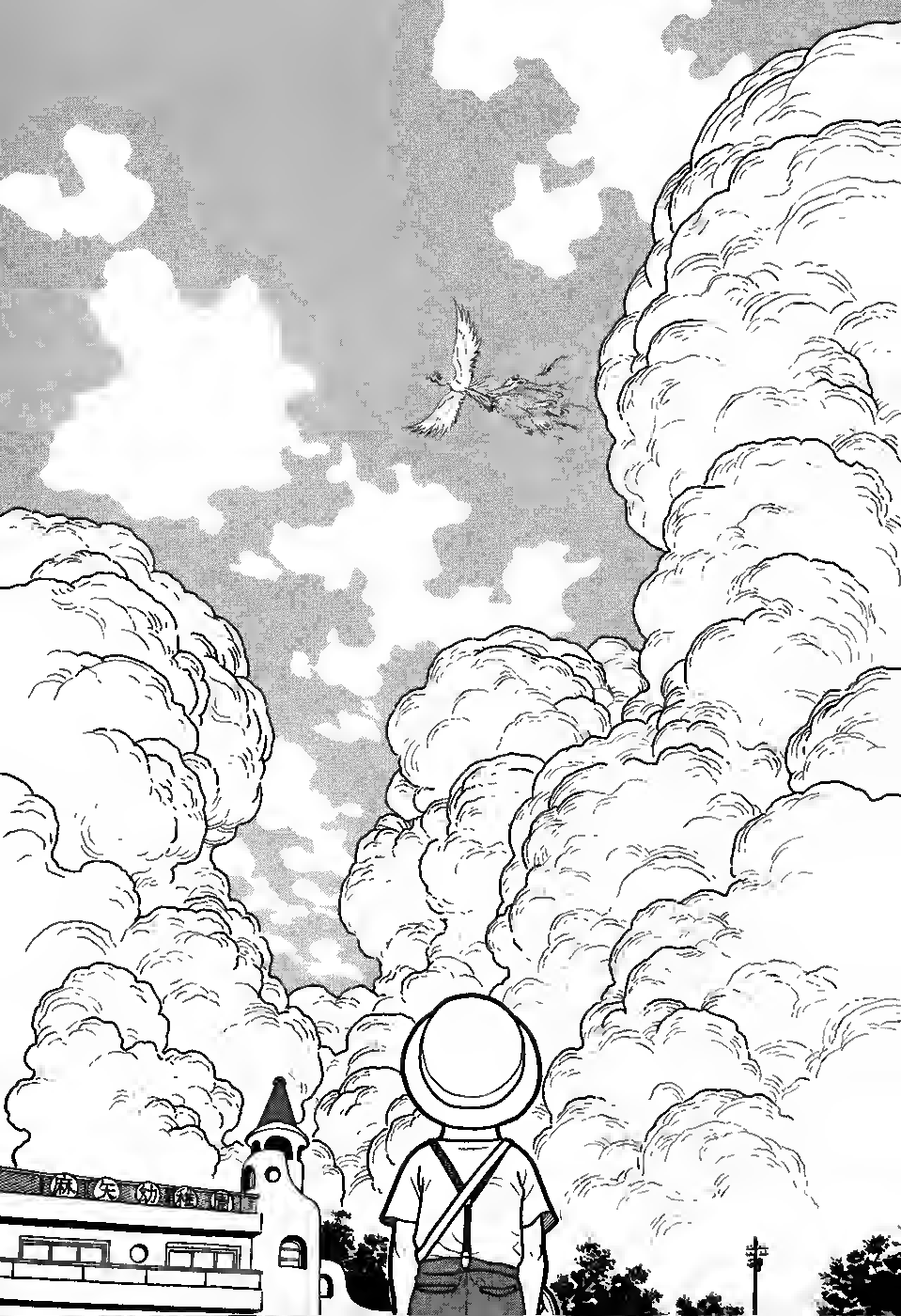
"Congratu-
lations!"
We
hope
you
enjoy
our,

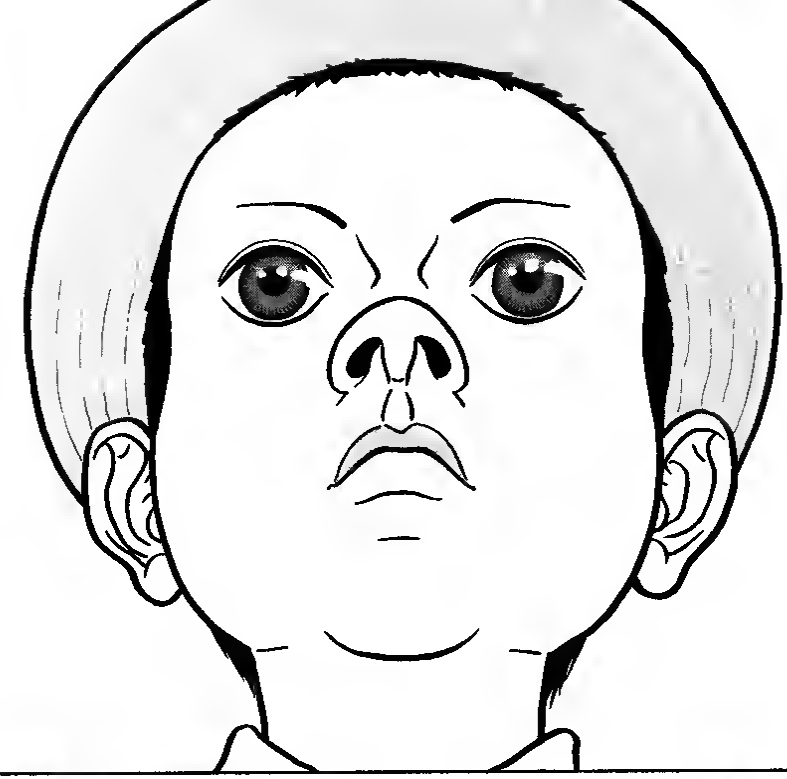

A
one,
two,
three...

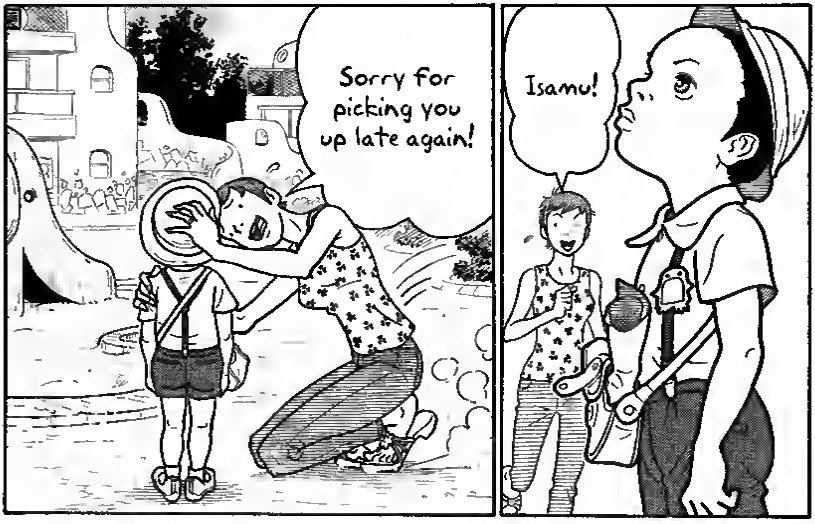
A
one,
A
two,

!
7

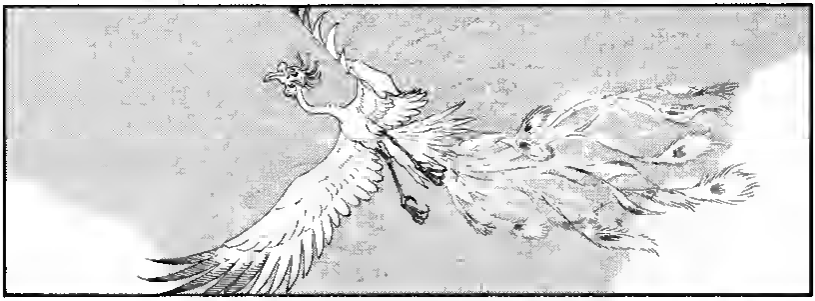
The hell?
Huh?
Hahaha! Perfect! Isn't this perfect!?
Uhhh...
Elm, where's the flashlight!?
Don't move until your eyes adjust to the dark!
Oww! Don't step on my feet!
Are you kidding me? A power outage!?
Oh for the love of god! I had a nice speech prepared and everything!
Sakai, what do we do now...?


麻矢幼稚園




Sorry for picking you up late again!
Isamu!

A bird?
Hm?
A bird!
Hm?
What're you looking at?



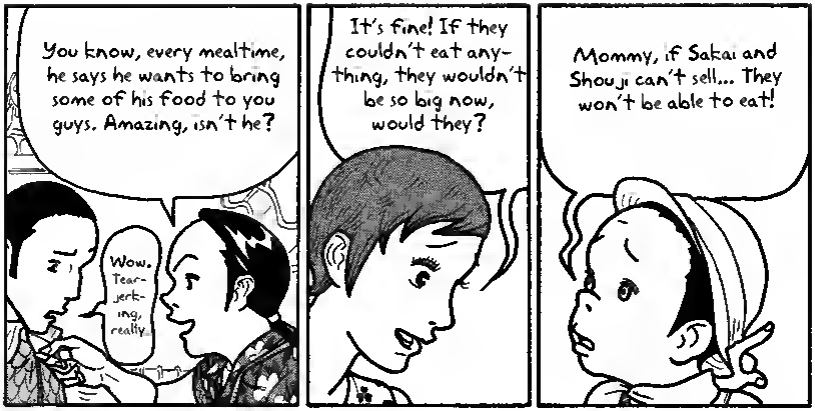
It's so pretty!
Oh my! Well isn't that something!

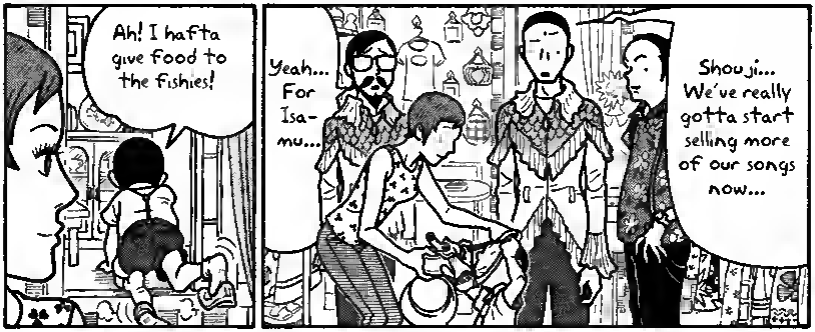
GOGH
Ha ha ha.

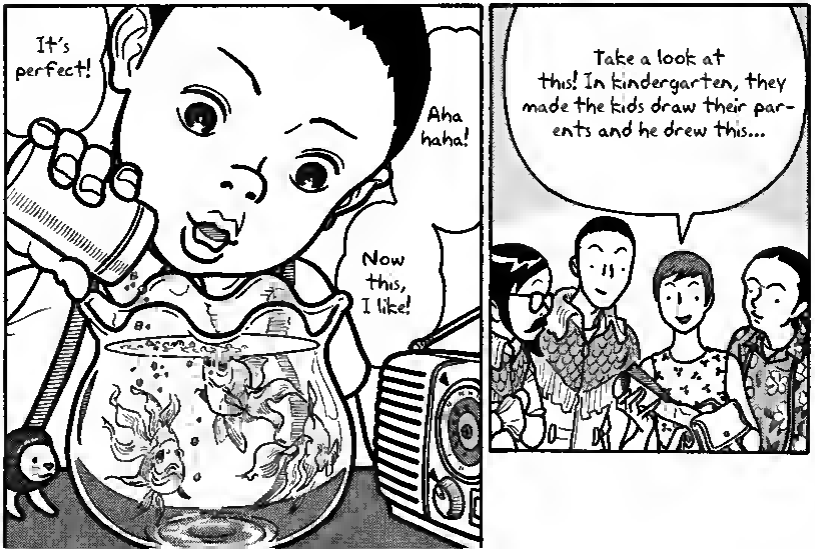
Did you sell any songs this time? Didyoudidyou!?
Oh hey, welcome back.
Ah!
We're back!

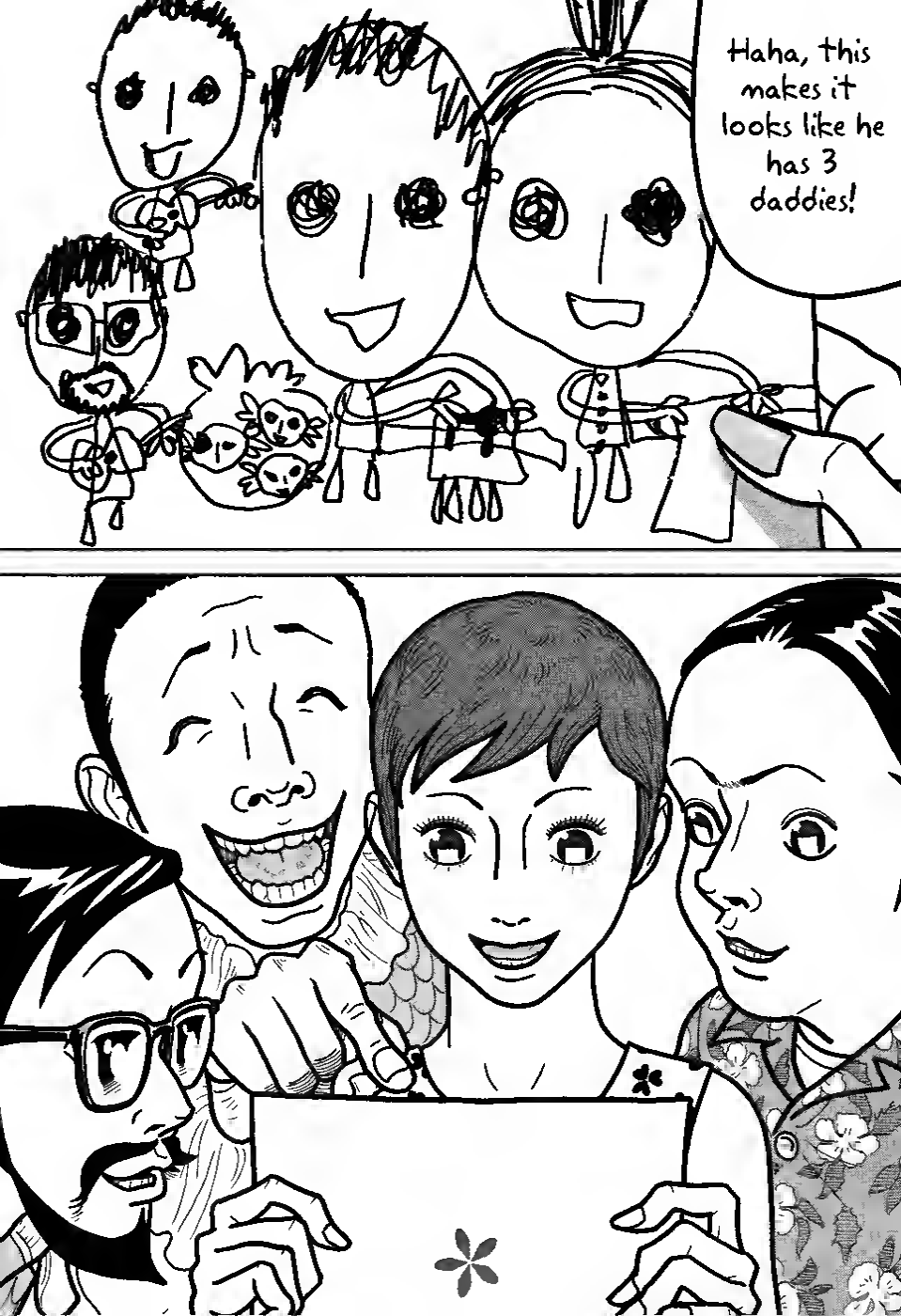
They don't? Is it because of mommy's costumes?
No, Isamu, it's really all our fault.

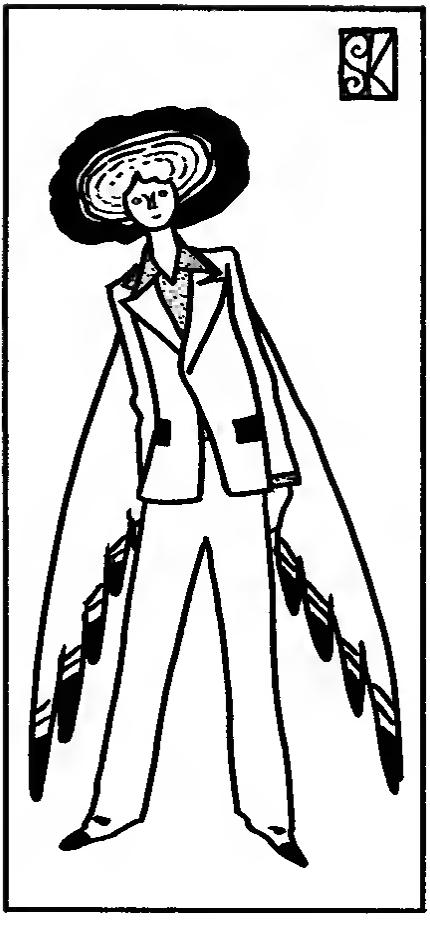
Songs don't sell that easily, y'know!
Why you gotta ask that every time we meet?


You know, every mealtime, he says he wants to bring some of his food to you guys. Amazing, isn't he?
Wow. Tear-jerking, really.
It's fine! If they couldn't eat anything, they wouldn't be so big now, would they?
Mommy, if Sakai and Shouji can't sell... They won't be able to eat!


Ah! I hafta give food to the fishies!
Yeah... For Isamu...
Shouji... We've really gotta start selling more of our songs now...

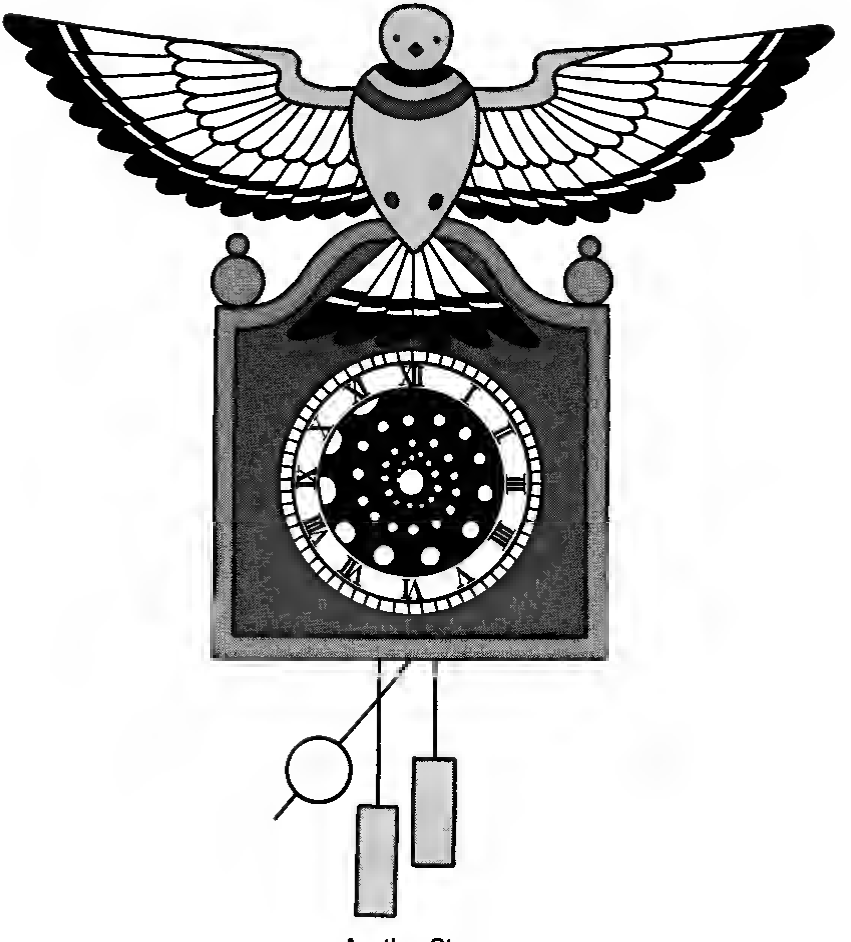

It's perfect!
Aha haha!
Now this, I like!
Take a look at this! In kindergarten, they made the kids draw their parents and he drew this...


Haha, this makes it looks like he has 3 daddies!

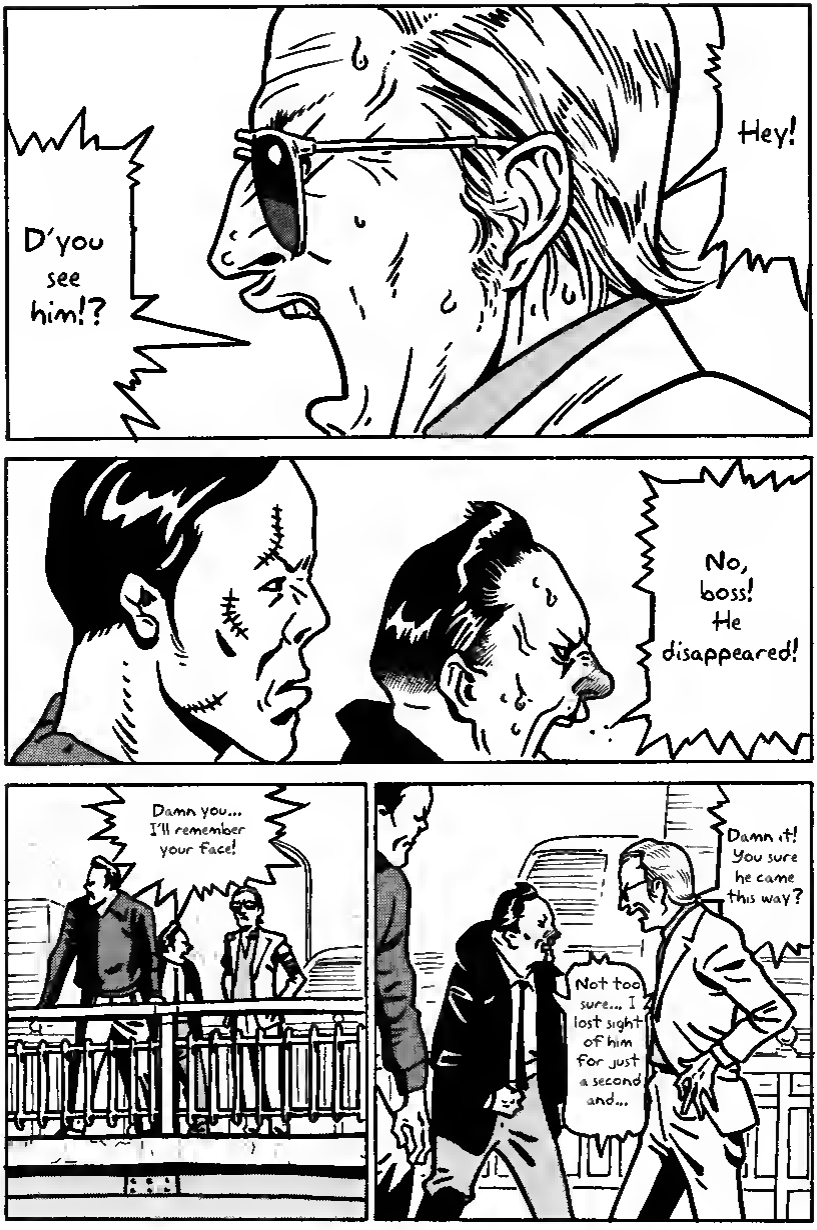


L&P

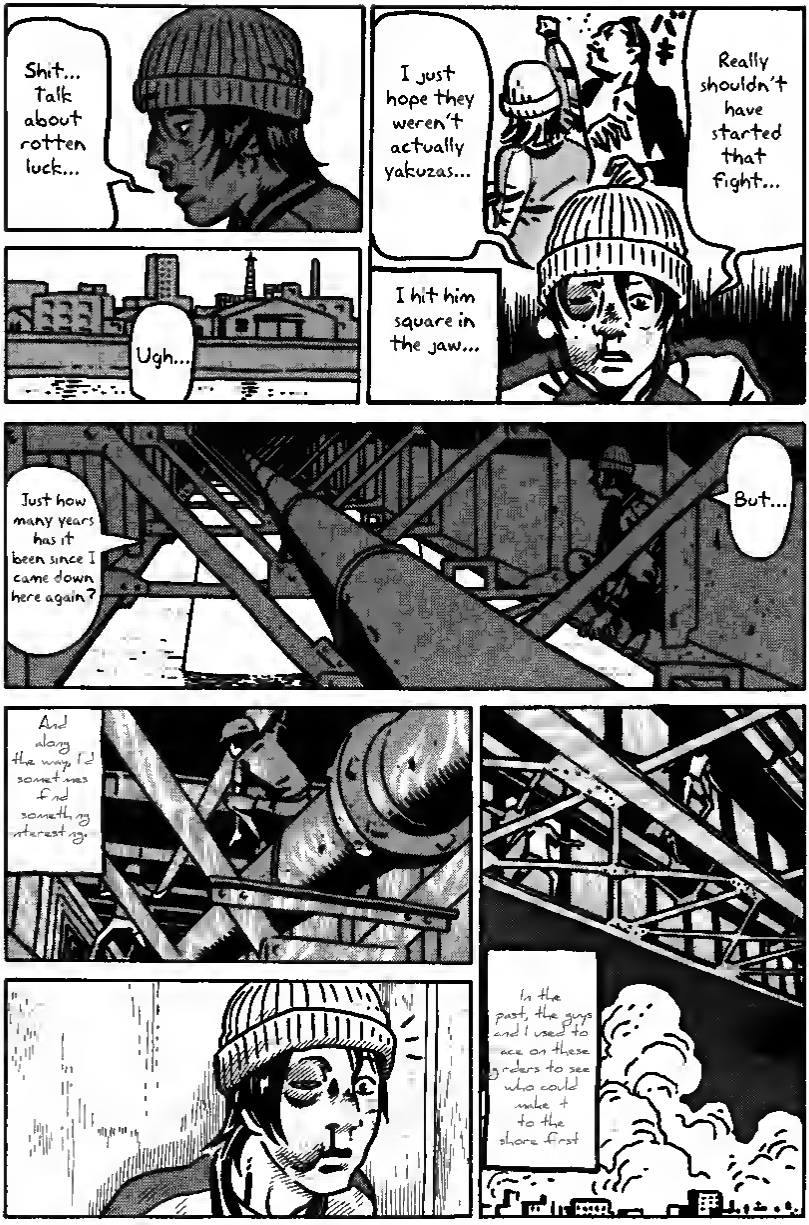
LOVE and PARAPARA



Another Story
Part1


Hey!
D'you see him!?
No, boss! He disappeared!
Damn you... I'll remember your face!
Damn it! You sure he came this way?
Not too sure... I lost sight of him for just a second and...

Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Here I am, beaten to a bloody pulp and lying underneath a damn bridge just because of a little barfight

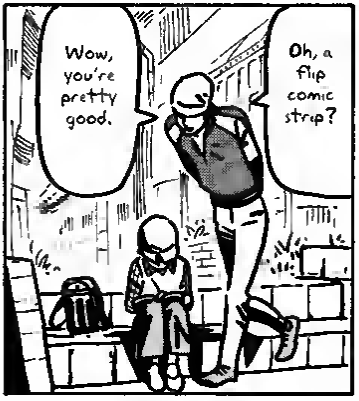

Shit... talk about rotten luck...
I just hope they weren't actually yakuzas...
Really shouldn't have started that fight...
I hit him square in the jaw...
Ugh...
Just how many years has it been since I came down here again?
But...
And along the way, I'd sometimes find something interesting.
In the past, the guys and I used to race on these girders to see who could make it to the shore first.

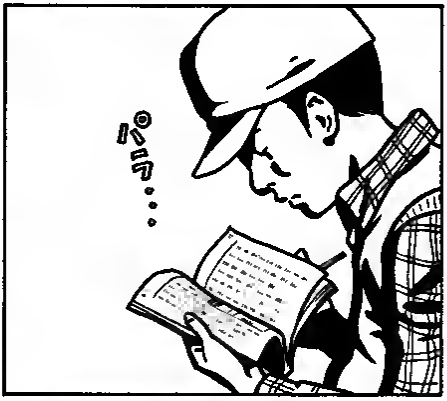
We used to run underneath the bridge every day until the chicks hatched
Oh, right, right.
Ah~
ポーポー
ポポポ
ポー
Man, this takes me back...
Even my patience has a limit!
The hell's wrong with your sales slip? It's full of holes all the damn time!
Drinking while the sun's still out. Sure goes to show what a dump my life's right now

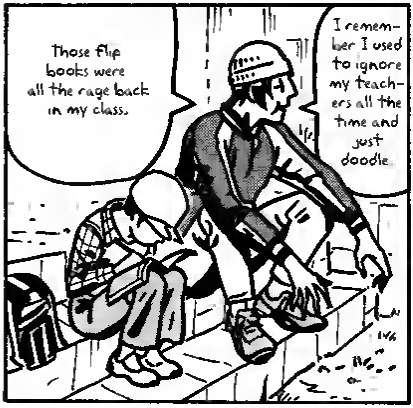
No degrees, no connections, and not even a girlfriend
I quit! I quit!
Making me more on edge than usual
And so, I now found myself in a precarious situation where I've no choice but to think about my uncertain future.
That does it I'm quitting
I've got no time to look after a helpless dumbass like you!
ハリウッド
ハリウッド
"I have no future!" Just how the hell did I end up this way?

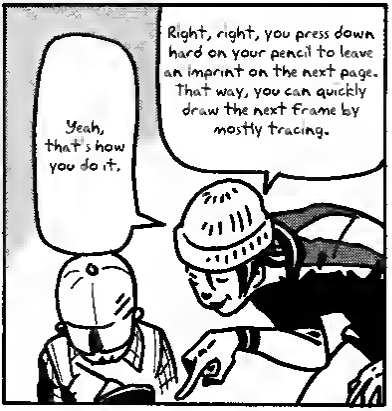
Ugh, my head.
Can't believe I'm getting myself beaten up at my age...
Pfff!
Wash Wash
Scribble
Flip Flip
Hm...

パラパラ
パラパラ
パラパラ
パラパラ


Wow, you're pretty good.
Oh, a flip comic strip?


パラ…


Those flip books were all the rage back in my class.
I remember I used to ignore my teachers all the time and just doodle.


Right, right, you press down hard on your pencil to leave an imprint on the next page. That way, you can quickly draw the next frame by mostly tracing.
Yeah, that's how you do it.

ハハハ...
Talk about stupid. You can't read an entire line when you're quickly flipping through.
But there was this one girl who couldn't understand the whole point of flip books.
She even drew speech balloons and wrote dialogue.
Man, what was her name again...
A real bad joke, see?
Just look at my banged up face.
Well, if you keep on doodling in your spare time, you'll end up as a big joke like me here.
Yuu...
So you're a third grader...
textbook reads: Grade 3, Class 4, Name Jinai Yuu
I could really go for a plain bowl of noodles with nothing on top.
Ahh...
Oww...
Any ways...
When was this built?
Huh, I've never seen this fountain before.

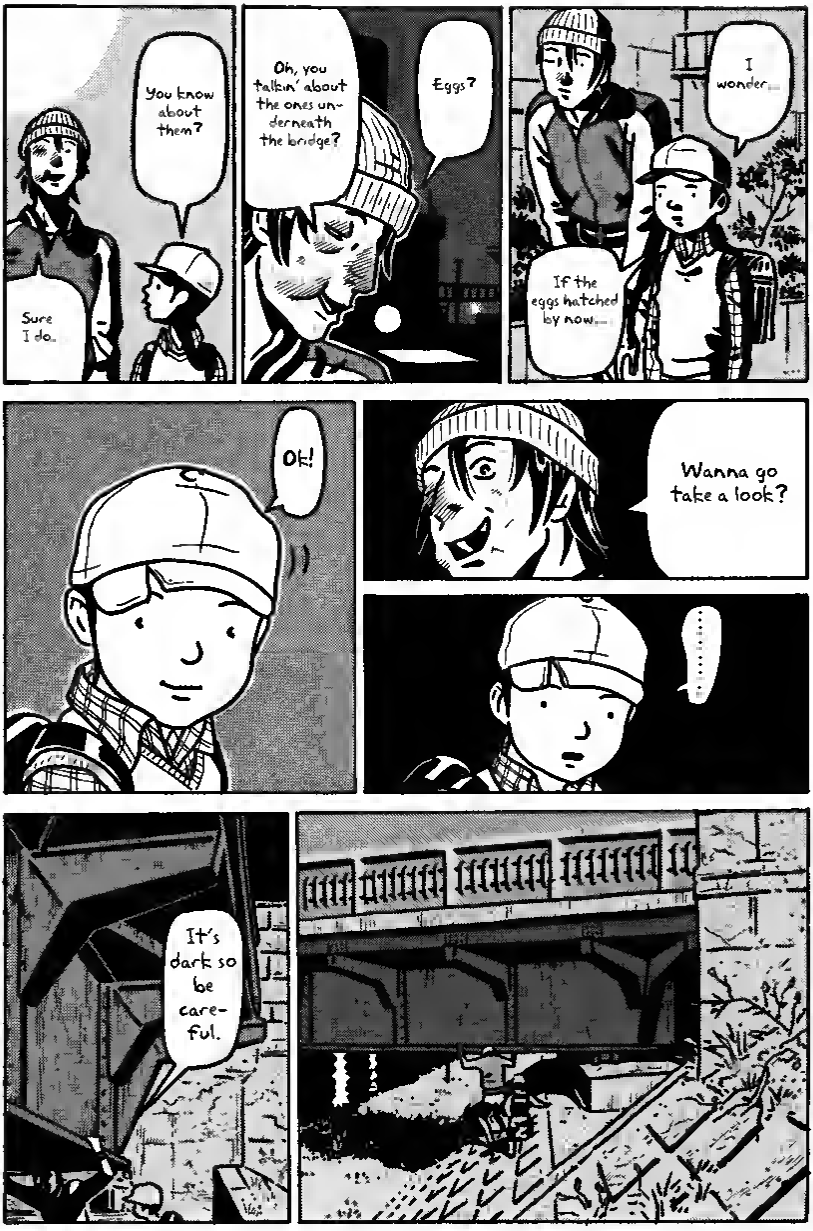
Wanna come with? It'll be my treat.
Ha,
I heard that.
グゥ
グゥ
Gurgle gurgle
Let's go then.
……
…Ok.
It's a policy of mine to at least do something nice for others when I'm having a rotten day.
O…
Ok…

I ended up coming out to this road!
Crap!
Huh?
Then they must be back at that shop.
Hmm, if they're not here,
T-they aren't still here, are they...?
Oh, for the love of...

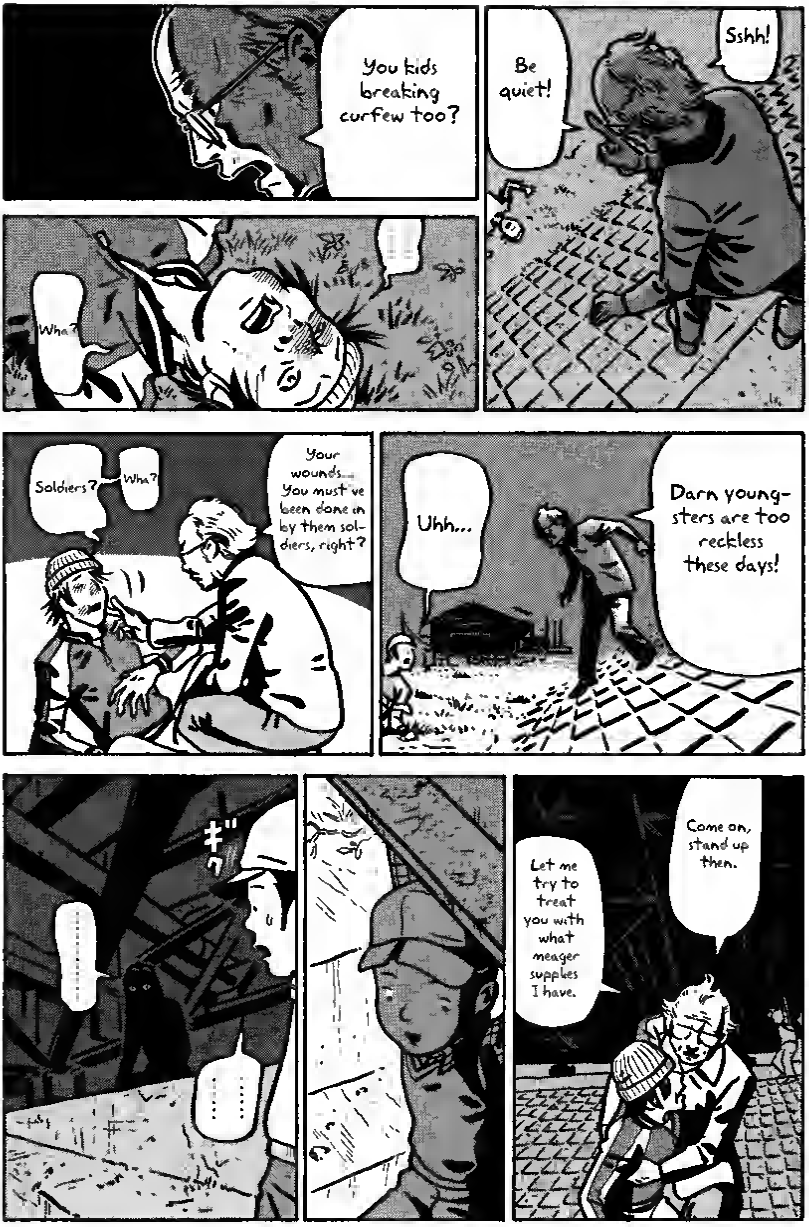
Ughh, just my luck.
Damn it. I was looking forward to cheering up with a bowl of noodles...
That building. I've never seen it before.
And that store's not a toy store anymore too.
Strange.
Something feels ...
Huh?
Like what?
Weird...
Well, no point in standing around here. Let's go get some tenshindon at Fukufukutei instead!
Huh? What're you talkin' about? That toy store went out of business years ago.

Huh ...
That's weird...
Looks like none of the shops are open.
I'll buy you a meal next time you're hungry though.
Sorry, kiddo.

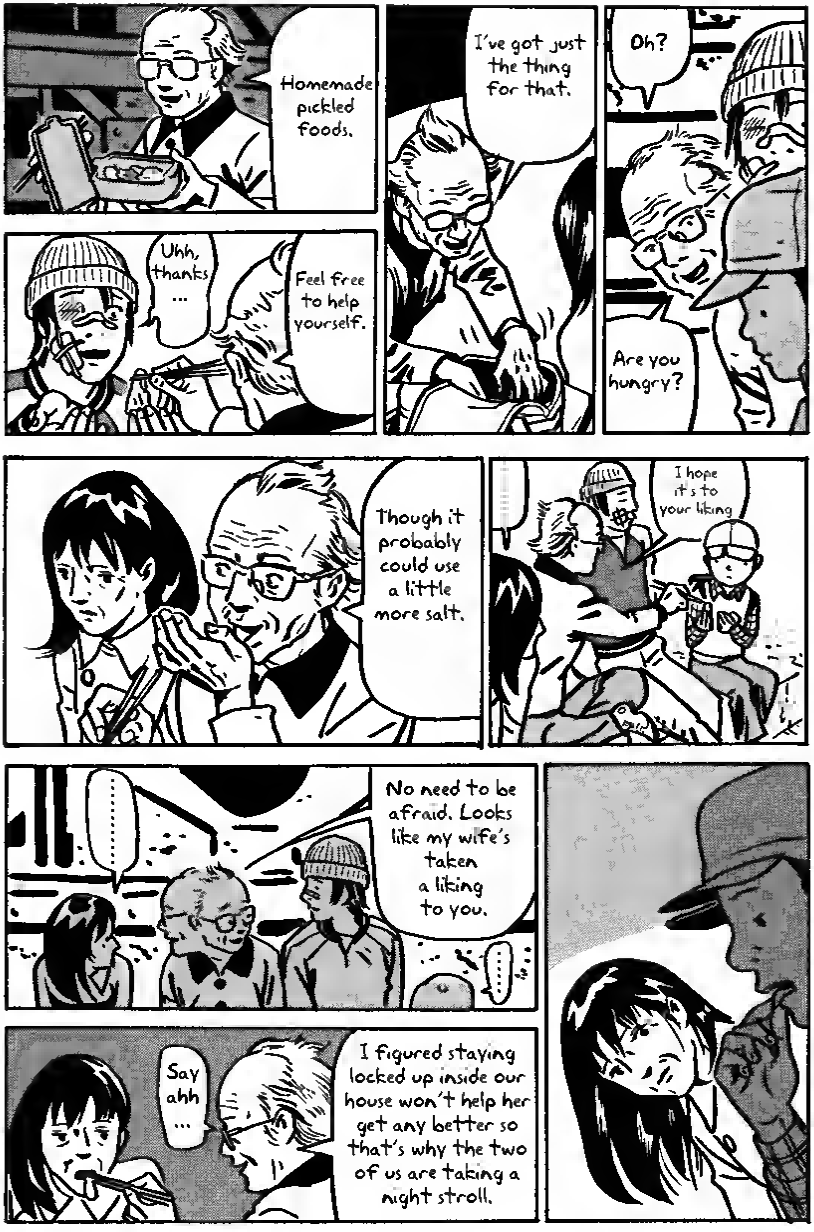
.....
Where's your home? The least I could do is walk you there.
What?
Feel-ing down?
I know how you feel. I used to kill some time outside as late as possible cause I didn't feel like going home.
Yeah...
You don't wanna go home?
Hm?
Haha...
My dad was a real scary guy and he'd beat me whenever he was drunk.


You know about them?
Sure I do.
Oh, you talkin' about the ones underneath the bridge?
Eggs?
I wonder...
If the eggs hatched by now...
Oh!
Wanna go take a look?
!
It's dark so be careful.

Huh?
Let's see...
Ahh hh hh
Aghhh!

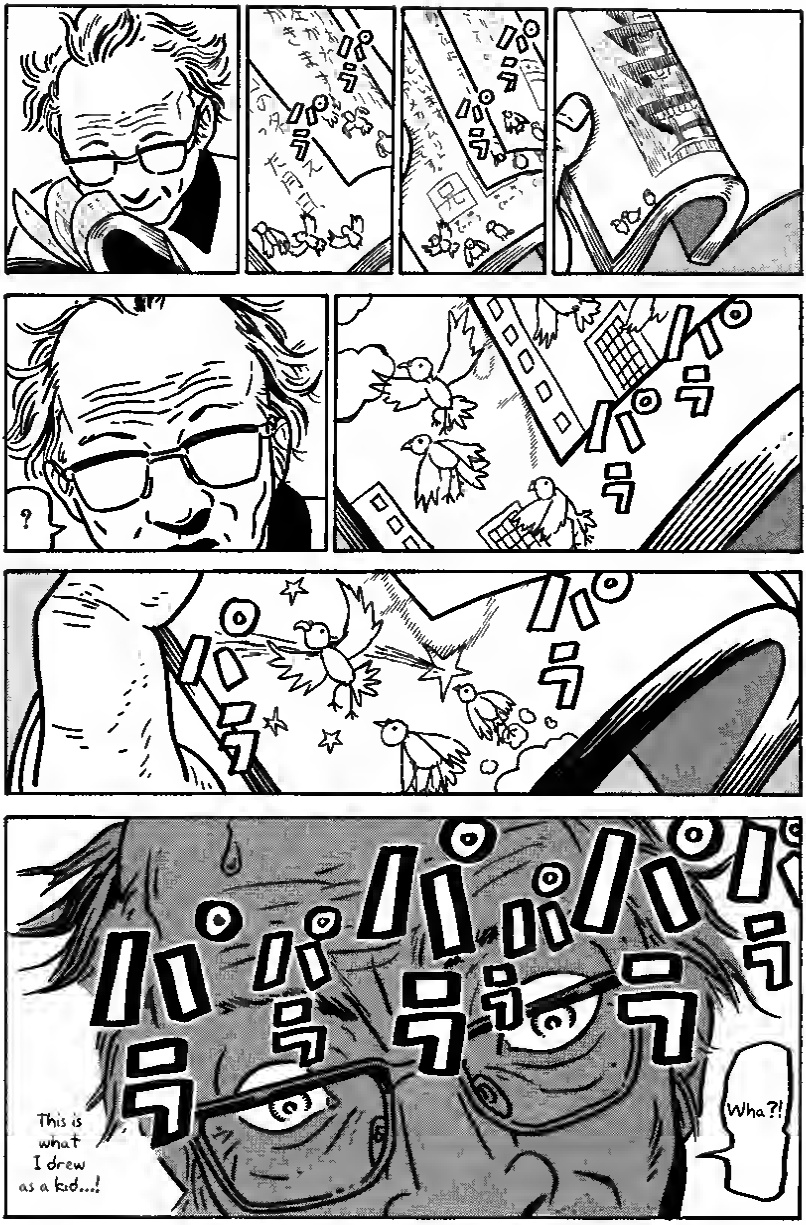

You kids breaking curfew too?
Sshh!
Be quiet!
Wha?
Your wounds... You must've been done in by them soldiers, right?
Soldiers?
Wha?
Darn youngsters are too reckless these days!
Uhh...
ギク
Come on, stand up then.
Let me try to treat you with what meager supplies I have.

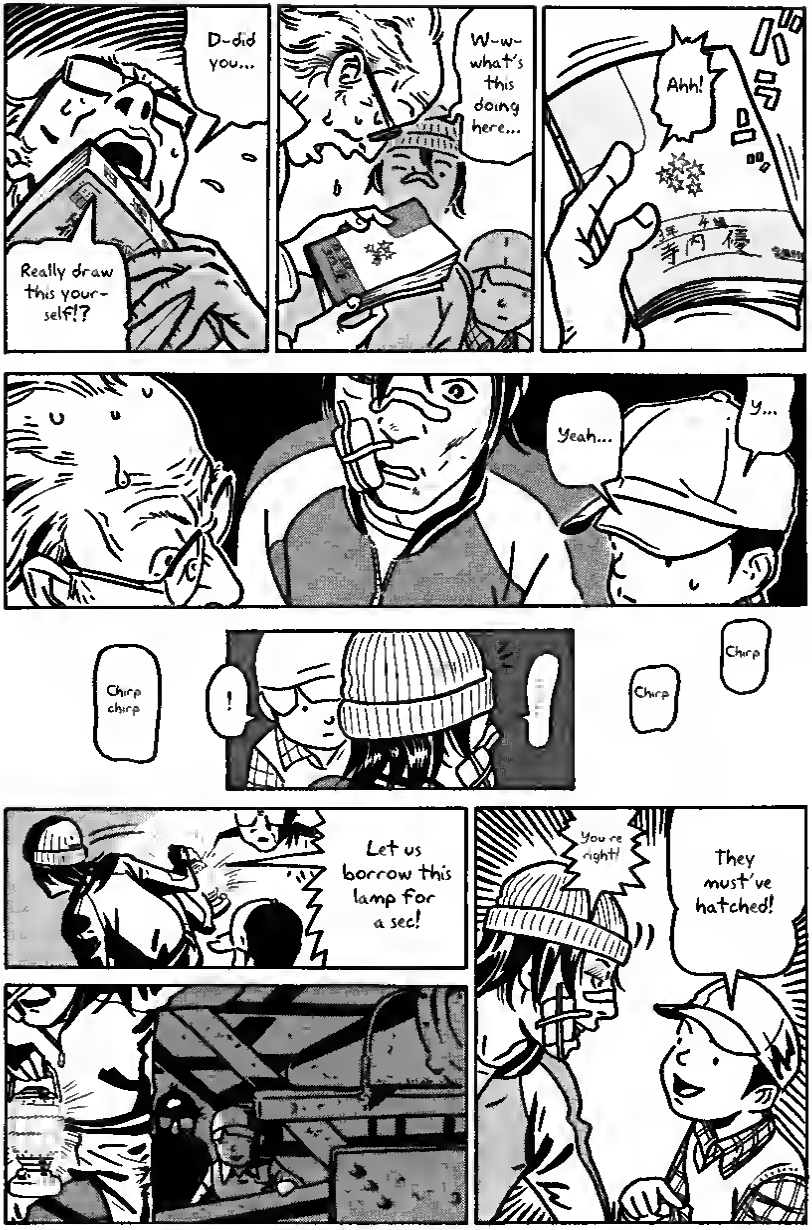
You kids did pretty well escaping to all the way out here
Thanks...
That's quite the journey. I'd only have expected old timers like me who have no more regrets in life to risk making such a dangerous trip.
Where'd you come from?
Uhh, I'm from around Sawa-hashira...
Gurgle
Guu-uurgle
Are you kiddin' me!? I ain't gonna stay here until morning!
R-right...
In any case, you should spend the night here for now. I'm sure we can figure something out when the sun comes up.


Homemade pickled foods.
I've got just the thing for that.
Oh?
Are you hungry?
Uhh, thanks ...
Feel free to help yourself.
Though it probably could use a little more salt.
I hope it's to your liking
No need to be afraid. Looks like my wife's taken a liking to you.
Say ahh ...
I figured staying locked up inside our house won't help her get any better so that's why the two of us are taking a night stroll.

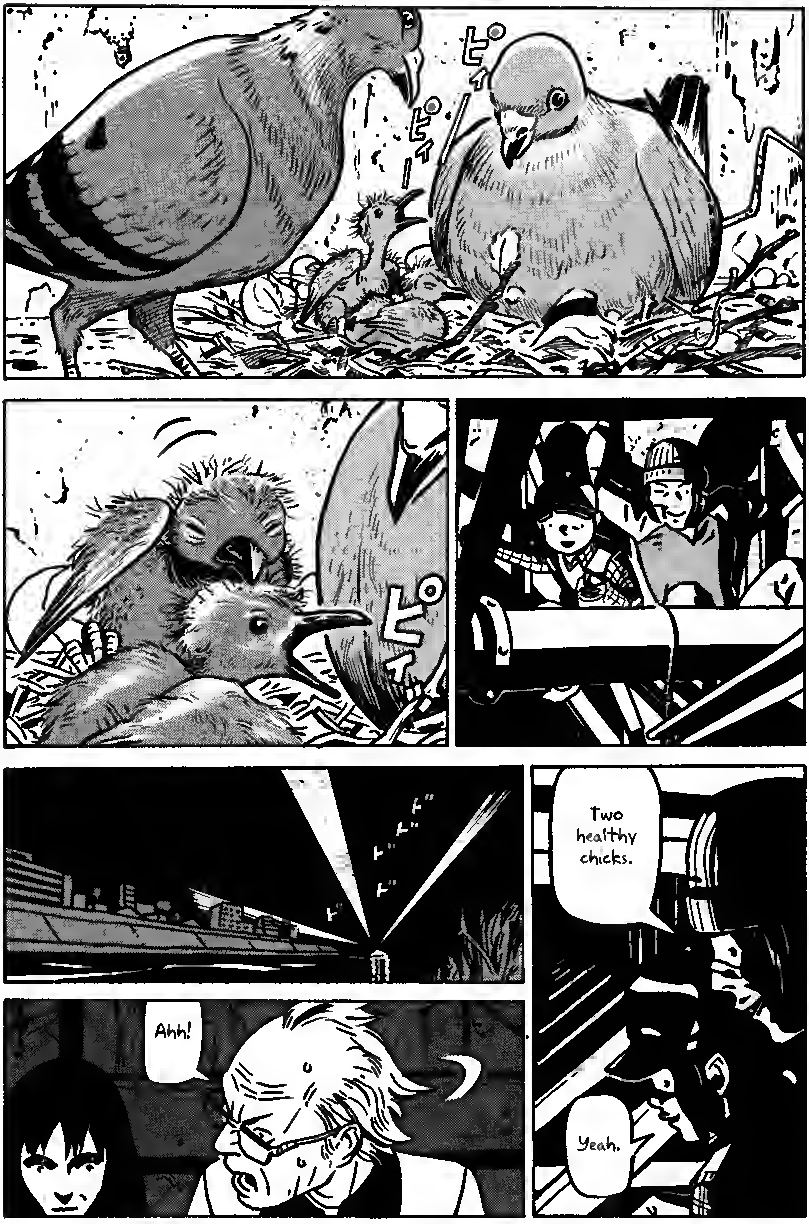
It was a strange atmosphere underneath the bridge. I could sense the old man's feelings for the woman and it somehow painfully tugged at my own heart too.
We should leave... I feel like I'm intruding.
.....
Make sure to chew your food well.
Ha ha ha.
You know, I used to come here all the time back when I was young.
This is a sketchbook of my drawings.
Wow ...
Looks like we've got the same hobbies!
You two came here to see the pidgeons too?

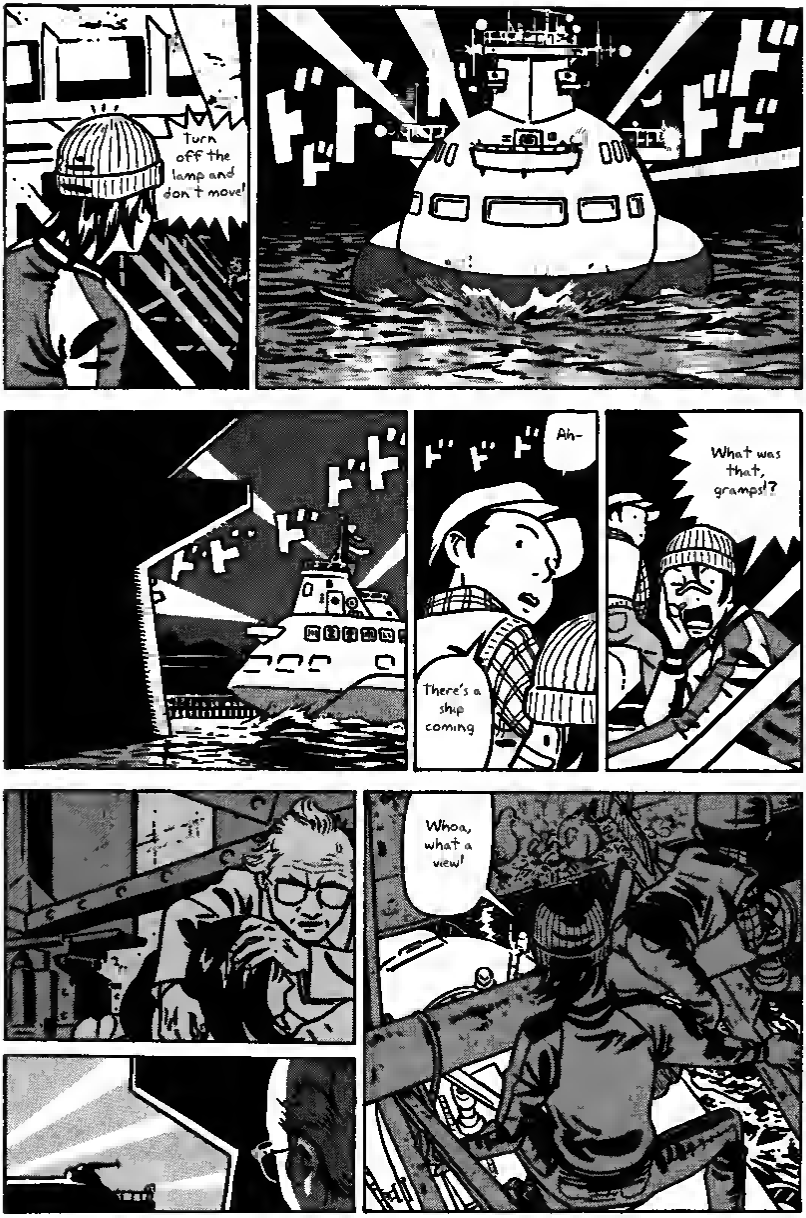
Ok...
O...
Oh? I'd love to see it if you'd let me.
C'mon, show him.
You know, this kid here's pretty crazy about drawing pigeons too.
Huh?
C'mon. Show him already.
And his pigeons look like they're really flying!
That makes me want to see it even more!
Haha,
Yeah ...
Oh, is this a flip comic you made?
You look at this corner while flipping through.

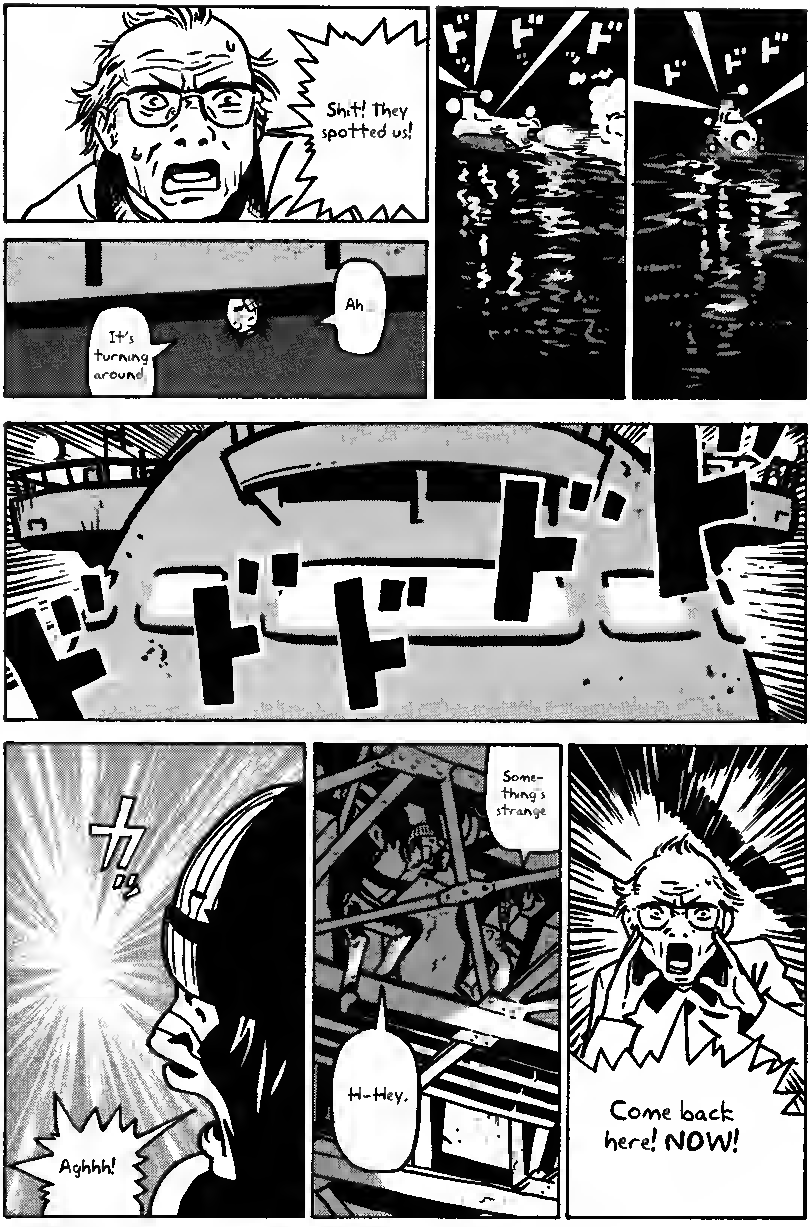

?
This is what I drew as a kid...!
Wha?!


D-did you...
Really draw this yourself!?
W-w-what's this doing here...
Ahh!
寺内優
y...
Yeah...
Chirp chirp
!
Chirp
Chirp
Let us borrow this lamp for a sec!
You're right!
They must've hatched!

Then what's your name!?
Oh, that textbook is my friend's. She lent it to me because she wanted me to draw a comic.
Wait! Where did you get this book!?
Suhara Shuhei.
I'm...
Here...?
W-what's going on...


ピィ
ピィー
ピィ
Two healthy chicks.
Yeah.
Ahh!


Turn off the lamp and don't move!
ドドド

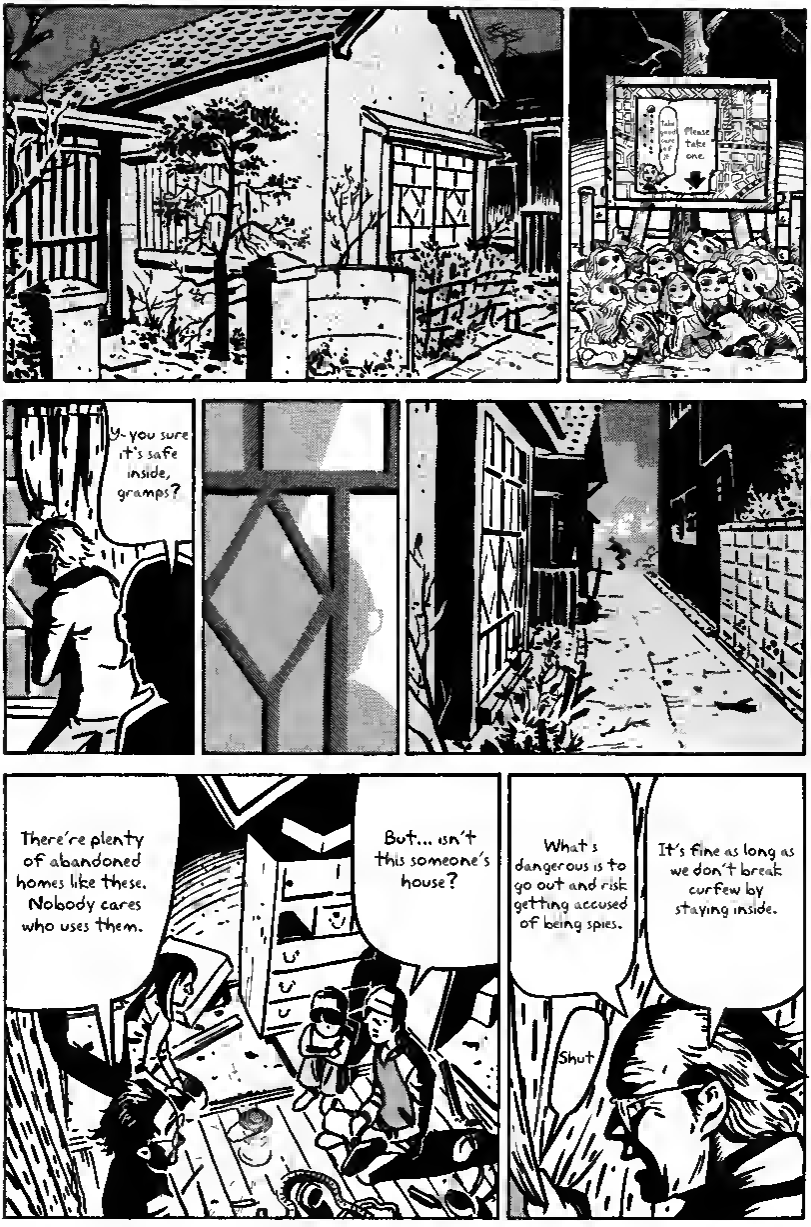

Shit! They spotted us!
Ah
It's turning around!
ドドド

Yuu! We have to run!
Run for it!
W-what? Why? What's going on?
You idiot! Keep running!
Ah-
The hell's going on!?

What was that!?
curfew breakers spotted!
Don't just stand there! You wanna end up in a bodybag!?
Whoa...
Keep running!
The hell is that weird tank doing out here!? Did a war break out or something!?
You mean you really don't know!?

Wha?!
We've been at war for years already!
That's a tank headed out to the frontlines!
Japan's split up into 2 major factions and we're in the midst of a civil war right now!
Wha...
GO REDS
DESTROY THE WHITES
To fight is to show love.
I support the reds. Actress Ueda Sonoko

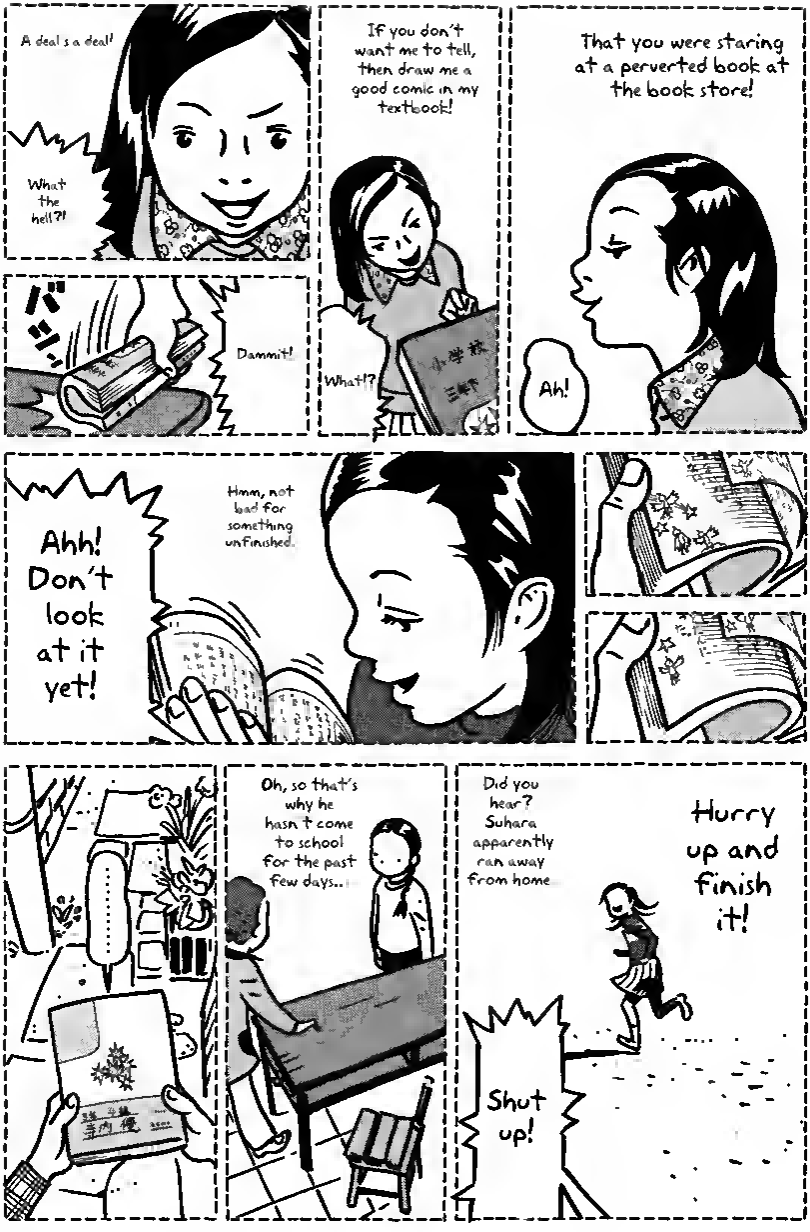
A-are you alright!?
ガンばれ!赤組
赤組
!!!
When ...?
Showa period?
I told you already! From Sawahashira!
Not where! When?!
Can you stand?
When did you kids come from?
Yeah
Pursuing suspects in Matsuhori district! Requesting backup!
Beep beep
Oh no!

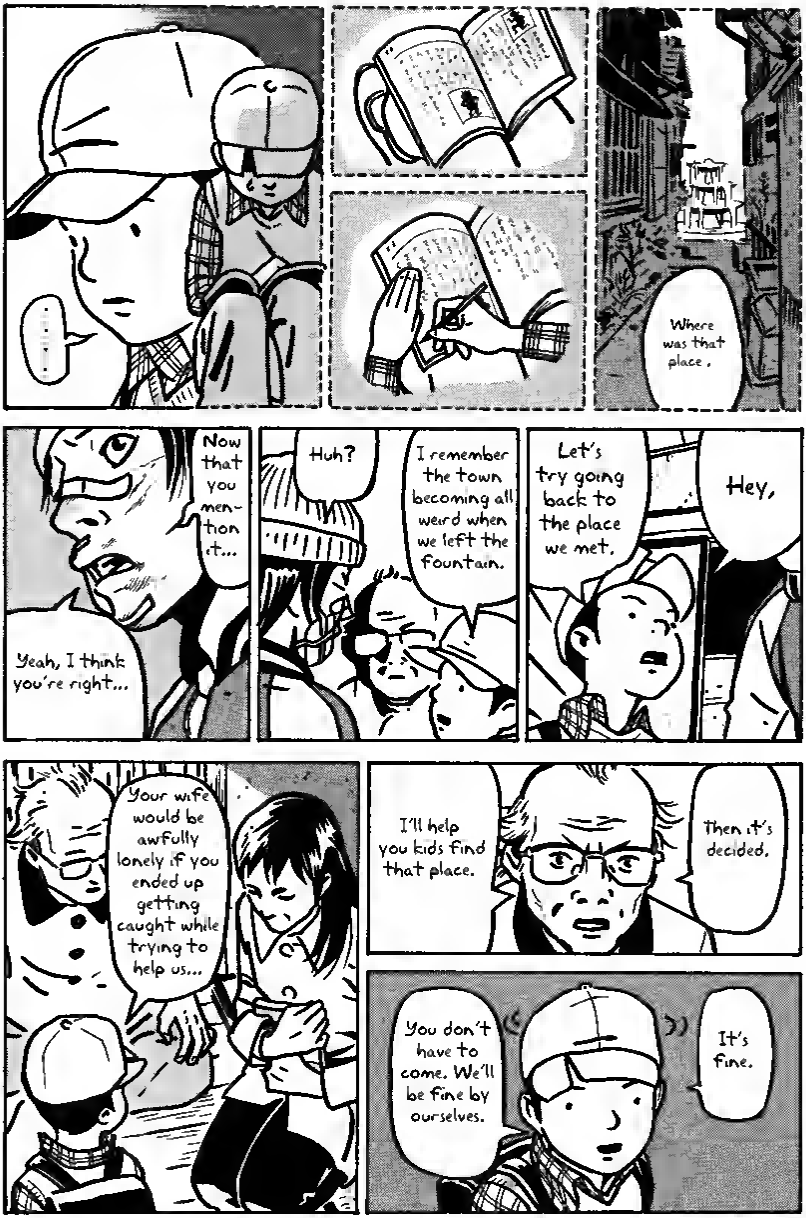

Please take one.
Y- you sure it's safe inside, gramps?
There're plenty of abandoned homes like these. Nobody cares who uses them.
But... isn't this someone's house?
What's dangerous is to go out and risk getting accused of being spies.
It's fine as long as we don't break curfew by staying inside.
Shut

My head's spinning from trying to make heads or tails out of this ..
Ughh...
I don't support either the Whites or the Reds.
Don't be ridiculous! What kind of spy would be taking care of a sick woman?
You're, uhh...
Not a spy, are you though?
If so, I'd advise you to hurry up and go back home as soon as possible.
Then there must be some way to return to the world you came from.
In any case, if what you're saying is the truth,
Well it's not like we want to stay here either. But it's hard to figure out where's where in this world...
Thank you for this...
!!
トントン
.....

Poke poke

No, it's fine...
Umm, honey, he said his friend lent him this so you can't...
What?
I'll look at it carefully.
You can have it...
Ahaha! What the heck is this?
You drew speech bubbles!? You can't read an entire line when you're quickly flipping through!
Hahaha! You're such a big dummy! Hey, everybody!
What's your problem!?
If you're gonna tell, then I'm gonna tell everyone too!
Tell what?!


A deal's a deal!
What the hell?!
If you don't want me to tell, then draw me a good comic in my textbook!
That you were staring at a perverted book at the book store!
バッ
Dammit!
What!?
Ah!
Ahh! Don't look at it yet!
Hmm, not bad for something unfinished.
Oh, so that's why he hasn't come to school for the past few days..
Did you hear? Suhara apparently ran away from home.
Hurry up and finish it!
Shut up!


Where was that place,
Hey,
Let's try going back to the place we met.
Huh?
I remember the town becoming all weird when we left the fountain.
Now that you mention it...
Yeah, I think you're right...
Then it's decided.
I'll help you kids find that place.
It's fine.
You don't have to come. We'll be fine by ourselves.
Your wife would be awfully lonely if you ended up getting caught while trying to help us...

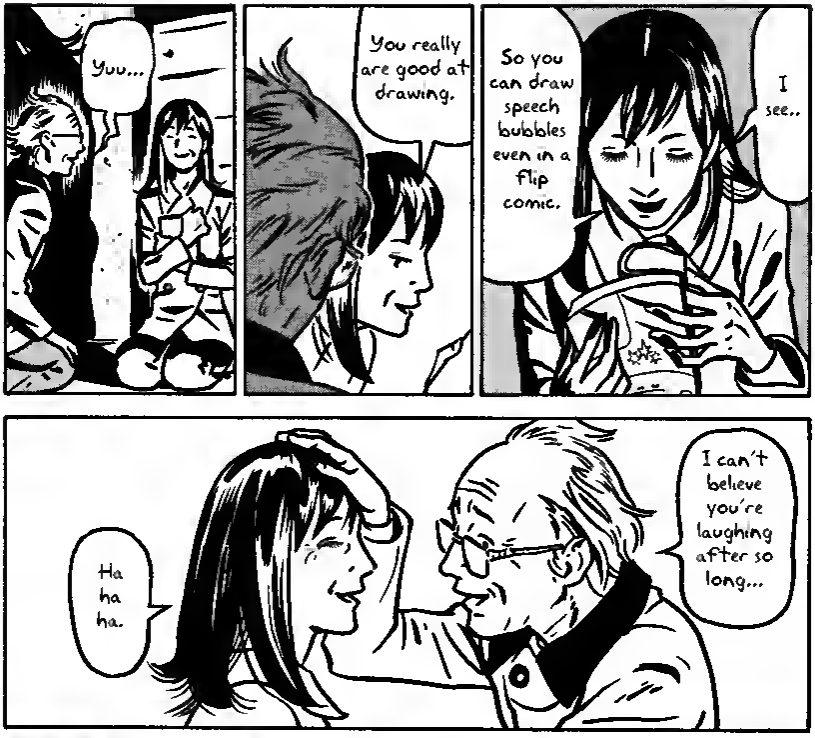
If you keep drawing, I guarantee something good will happen.
Keep at those drawings, you hear.
Thank you...
Thank you very much.
Ok!
You might even reunite with a person you were separated from long ago...
Despite all the troubles the two must have gone through, they were still full of hope and energy.
For some reason, their faces looked strangely reassuring.

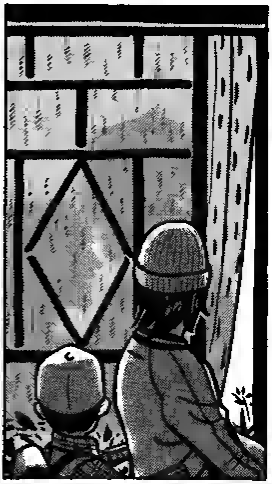
And take better care of yourself from now on.
Go right ahead.
We'll be taking your bicycle then, gramps!
I would've liked to see you too in better shape.
Ha ha.
?
Bye-bye,
Gramps!
Good-bye, then!
Huh?
Ha ha

Ha ha ha.
Hahaha!
Yuu...
They're flying.
Ha ha ha!
Hahaha!

Huh? What textbook!
Ieez!
So you did forget! I bet you lost my textbook too!
Hey, do you remember? About the textbook I lent you to draw a flip comic?
Huh? Flip comic?
And they were flying through the starry sky.
Huh?
Yeah, just like this! They looked like they were really flying!
ゴオオオオ
Cheers!
Art Exhibition Special Award
Suhara Shuhei

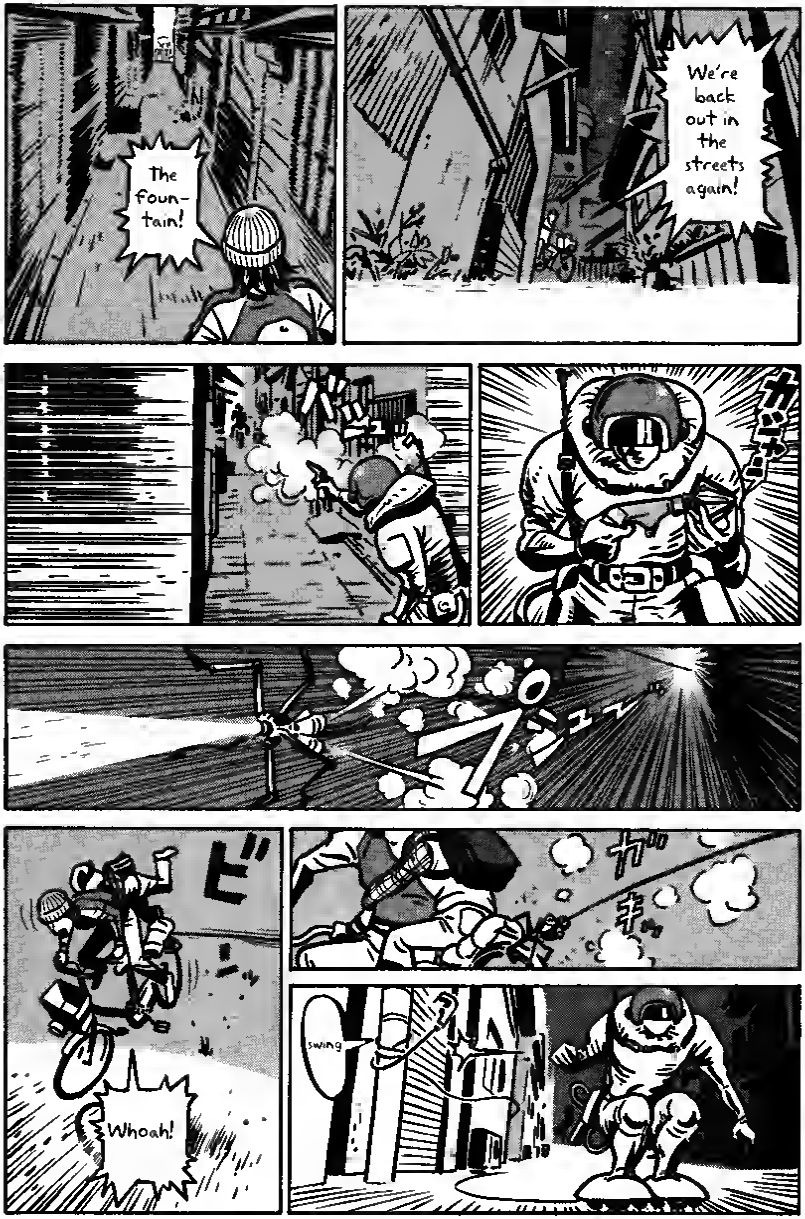
Noo!
No...
They've all burnt up...
We'll start all over again...
Dedicated to Yuu.
Ha ha ha.

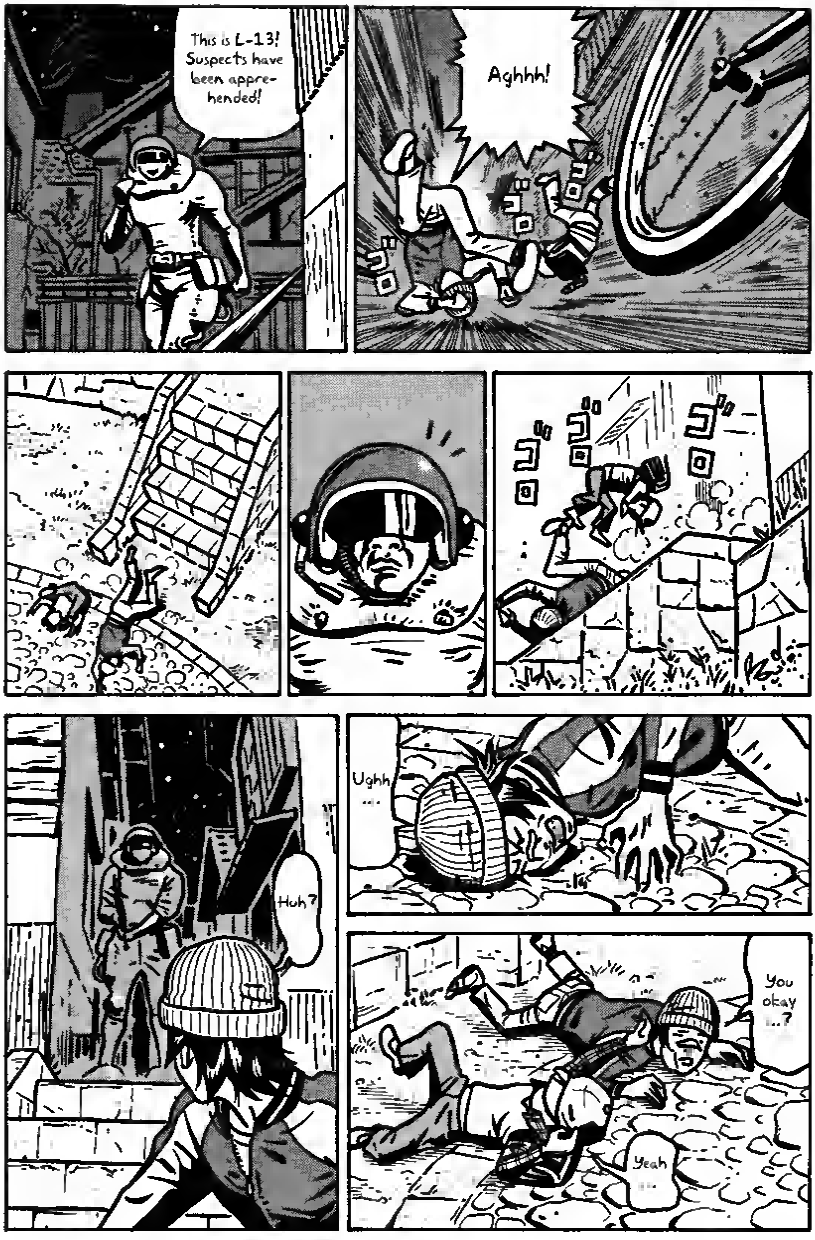

Yuu...
You really are good at drawing.
So you can draw speech bubbles even in a flip comic.
I see..
Ha ha ha.
I can't believe you're laughing after so long...



You cheered up that old lady.
Yeah.
ギッコ
ギッコ
ギッコ
ギッコ
ギッコ
Well isn't that nice.
Are you still drawing!?
Quit that shit and go to bed already!
I remember there used to be a time when I'd draw and draw while oblivious to the time
That's right. Drawings even have the power to bring a smile to someone who hasn't smiled in years!
I guess drawings really are a magical thing!
Now we gotta get you home or your dad'll be angry.
It's fine. He probably passed out from drinking too much again!
I think I'll give painting another shot!
Thanks kid. It's all coming back to me because of you!

Suspects spotted in Funagasawa block 2!
Crap! They found us!
Agh!
Ahhh!
Turn at the next corner!
Too dark


The foun-tain!
We're back out in the streets again!
バッ
ガッ
ビ
Whoah!
swing


This is L-13! Suspects have been apprehended!
Aghhh!
ゴゴゴゴゴゴ
Huh?
Ughh...
You okay...?
Yeah...

They vanished...
W...
What in the...
What's wrong with him?
Ack!
Huh?
D-d-don't tell me they were..!?
.....

You hurt anywhere?
No
You came from here.
While I came from over there.
Oh, I see.
So maybe it's all because of this place..
So all these staircases lead to different worlds,
Is that it?
Look over there!
Hm?
!
I think we should take that old man's advice and hurry back to our own worlds.

There, I saw a pigeon casually walking on the fourth set of staircases that I hadn't noticed until just then
Which world does that path lead, I wondered...
The past? The future? Or some other dimension altogether?
Whatever the case, it was certain that we were all connected under this vast sky
You know, I also like noodles with nothing else!
Ha ha.

Same hobbies, same tastes, and even the same name now?
But that's a coincidence.
Oh, sorry.
Also, my name's not Yuu.
It's Shuhei.
Oh, is it?
My name's also Shuhei!
Bye!
Take care then!

Ah!
Huh?
Let's see...
Am I finally back in my own world?
ガニ
Stop right there!
Oh shit! I guess I really am back!
Boss, it's him!
What is it?
What the...
Let me at him first!
The fountain... vanished...
ゴロ...
Ugh...

Sorry ain't gonna cut it, pal!
Sorry?
Rapists! Thugs! Criminals! Murderers!
Somebody! Help!
Kyaaaaa!
!!
And I'll spill your guts all over the streets here!
Lay even one finger on our girl,
Something wrong?
What's going on!?
No, down there!
Are you alright up there?

Are you alright down there?
Hmph
Let's beat it...
An angel's come for me...
An angel...
Jeez, you guys... We can't just let someone die right where we live.
Sorry, Yuu, I don't want to get caught up in a stranger's problems.
Can someone take him to the hospital?
Who cares about him? As long as you're fine, that's all that matters.

A bird flying across the night sky? What in the world...?
Sorry for the trouble.
Hold on, I'll come right down!
As I lay half-conscious and hallucinating such nonsense,
I thought the angel I had just seen might be the perfect model for my painting!

LAUGHING IN THE NIGHT

One night, I suddenly burst into laughter and couldn't stop.
アーッ
ハッハッハ
ハハハ
A picture of myself with both my eyes closed was also laughing.
ハッ
ハッ
ハッ
I was laughing so hard that I forgot what exactly it was that made me laugh in the first place.
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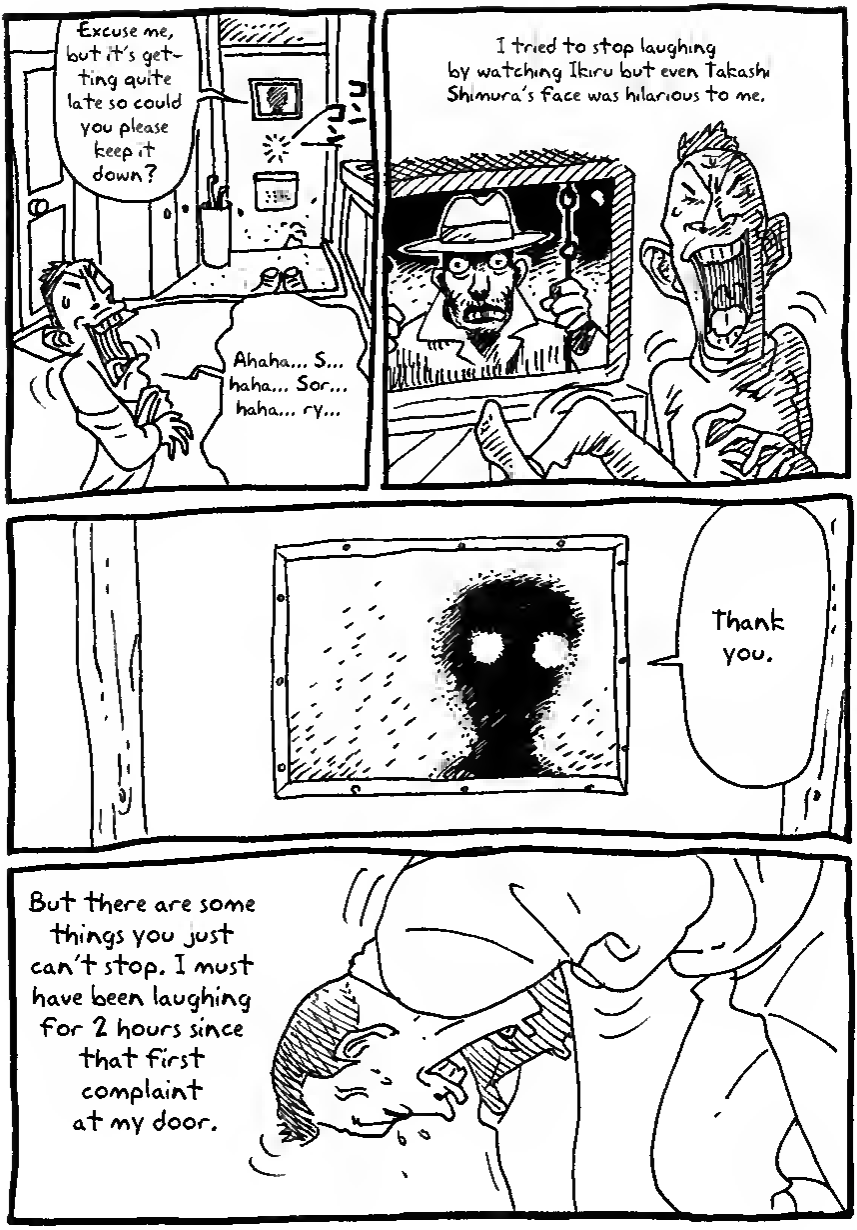
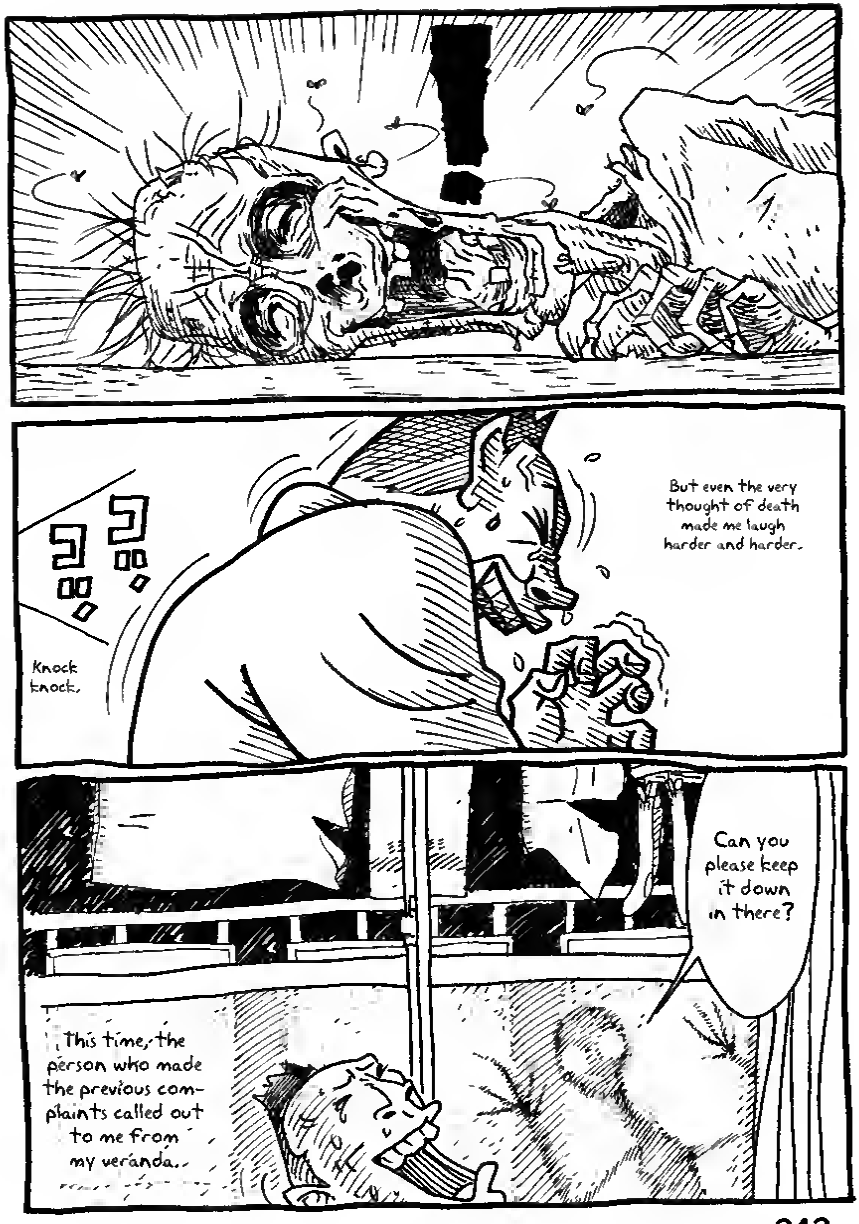
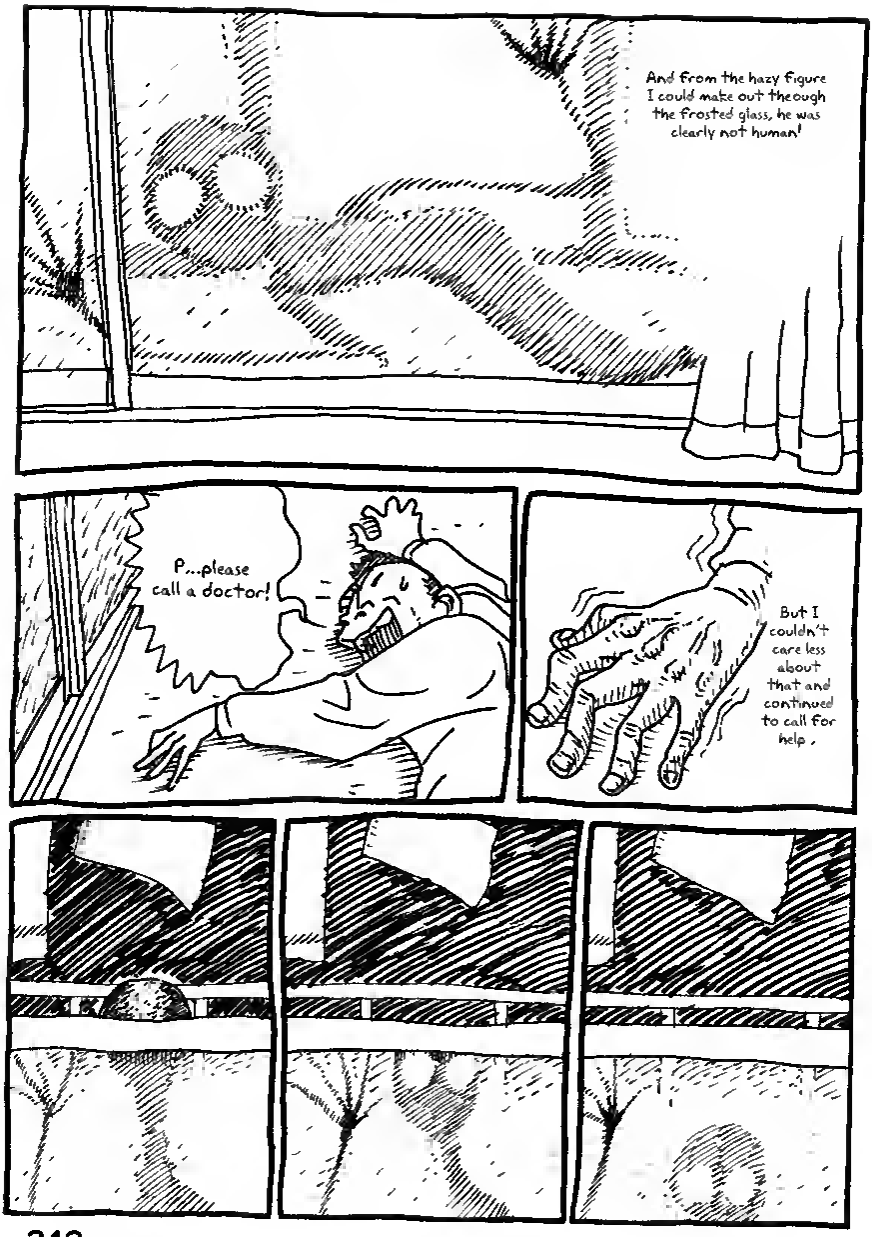
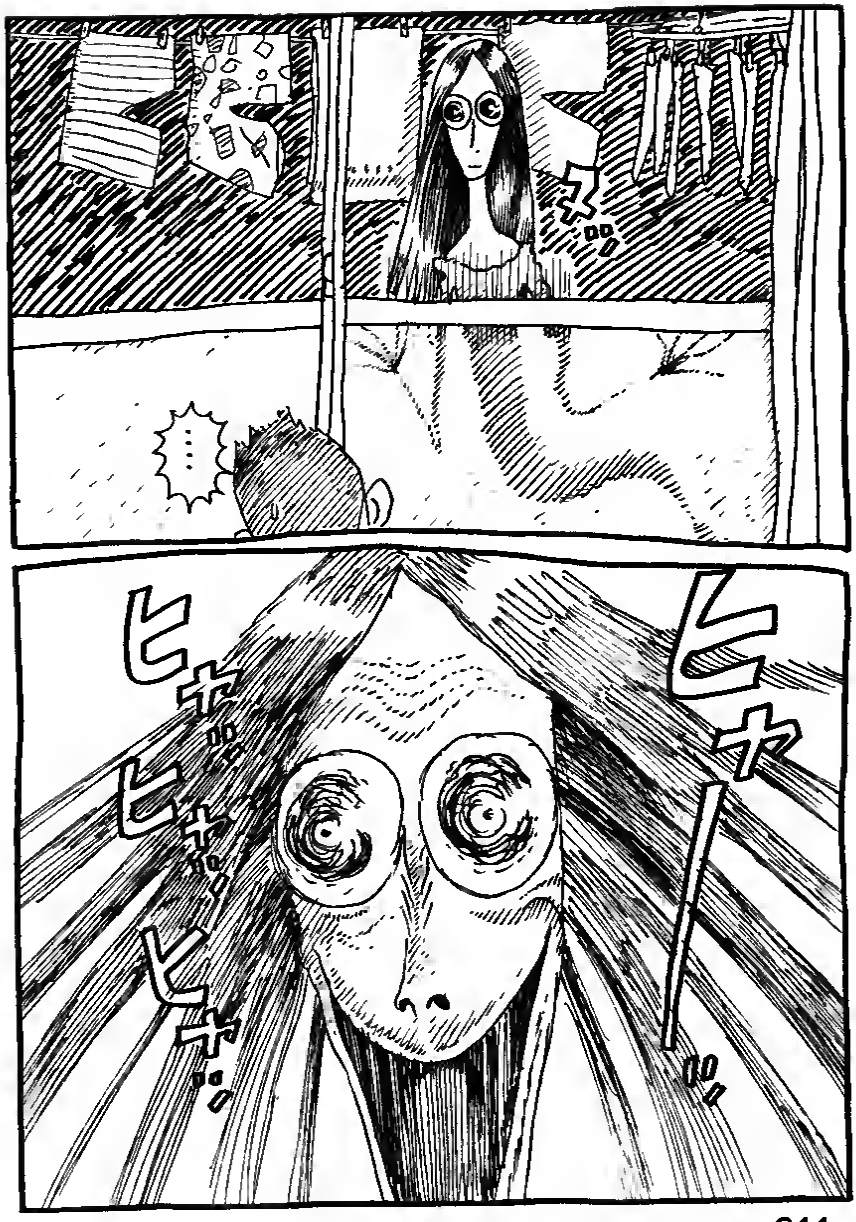
ハ
And so too was the voice I recorded on tape long ago.
アハハ
ピッ


Excuse me, but it's getting quite late so could you please keep it down?
Ahaha... S... haha... Sor... haha... ry...
I tried to stop laughing by watching Ikiru but even Takashi Shimura's face was hilarious to me.
Thank you.
But there are some things you just can't stop. I must have been laughing for 2 hours since that first complaint at my door.

Could I please ask you to keep it down in there?
S... sorry but... I... I really can't... stop l... laughi...
Excuse me, sir?
コーコー
Not surprisingly...
Call a... do...
Please ...
This was no laughing matter now!
If I kept on laughing any longer, I'd...
A doc... doctor...


Knock knock.
But even the very thought of death made me laugh harder and harder.
Can you please keep it down in there?
This time, the person who made the previous complaints called out to me from my veranda...


And from the hazy figure I could make out through the frosted glass, he was clearly not human!
P...please call a doctor!
But I couldn't care less about that and continued to call for help.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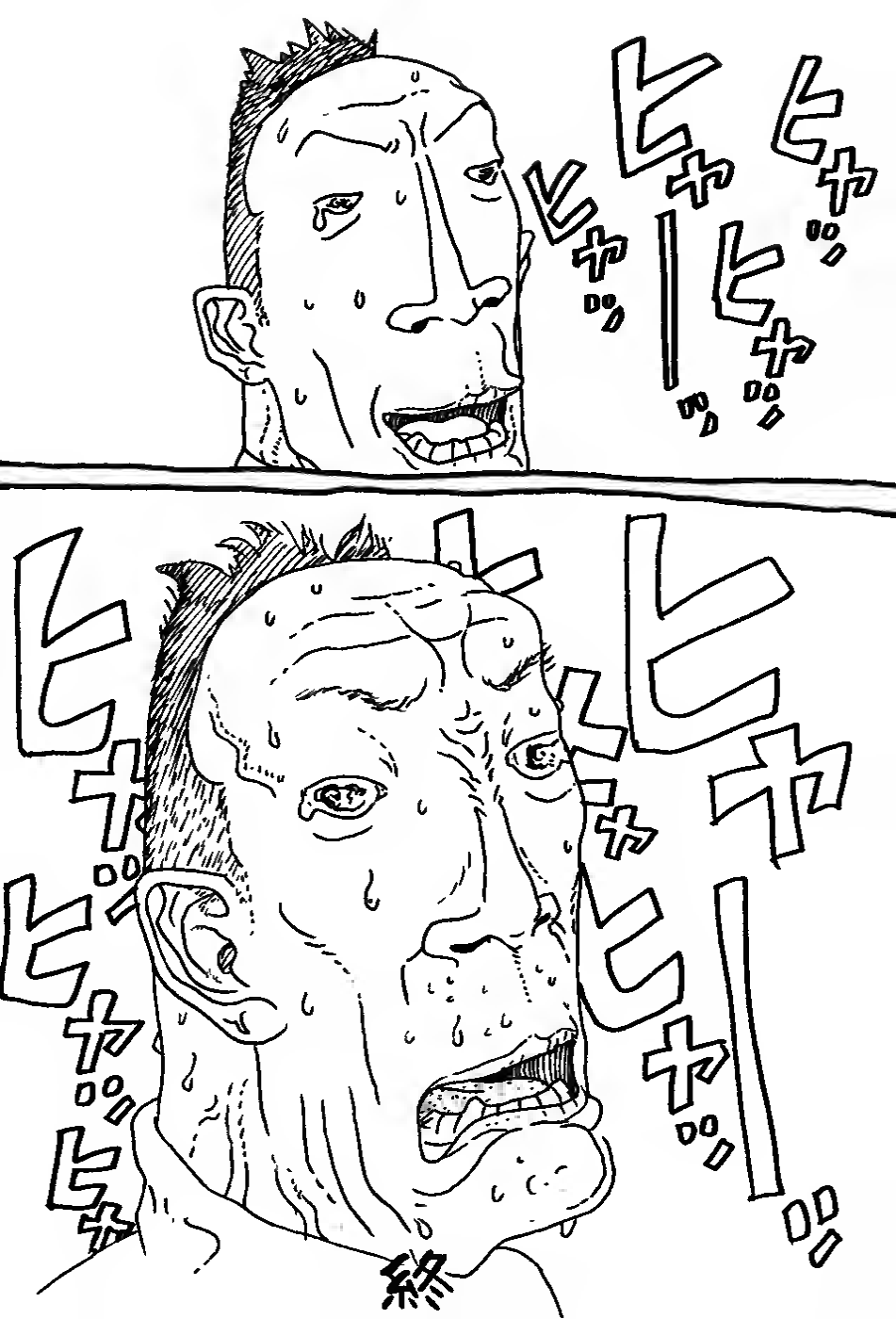
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